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Gaiety Chronicles

by

John Hollingshead

'The earth hath bubbles
as the water hath
And these are of them'

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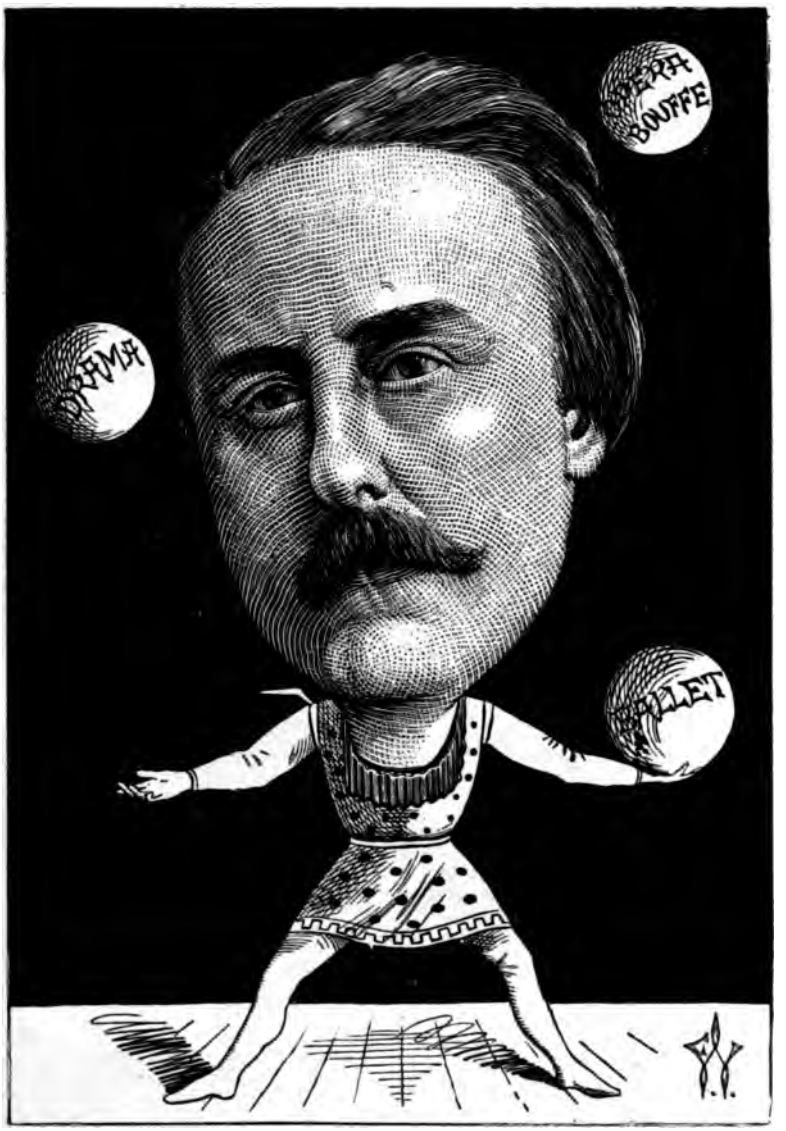
GAIETY CHRONICLES

By JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD



JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD

Gaiety Chronicles

By John Hollingshead

"The earth hath bubbles as the water hath
And these are of them"

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1898

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To

MY BROTHER JOURNALISTS

WHO DID NOT SPARE THE ROD AND

DID NOT SPOIL THE CHILD

NOTE

IN compiling this book at the express wish of my publishers, I have to thank the London Stereoscopic Company, Mr. Bassano, Messrs. Downey & Son, the successors to the late Samuel Walker, Mr. W. H. Coombes (the proprietor of *The Entr'acte*), Mr. Bryan, the artist, *Vanity Fair* ("Prosperity"), *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, *Graphic*, etc., for valuable aid in the illustrations, and Messrs. Sampson Low & Co., the publishers of my Autobiography, which I have had to quote in several places.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD

LONDON
June, 1898

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CHAPTER I

The Theatre

SHAKESPEARE, who had much to do with plays, though very little to do with play-houses, because he lived before they were built, was a "practical" acting-manager. He was one-tenth actor and nine-tenths showman. He selected parts, like the "Ghost" in *Hamlet*, which gave him two clear hours to look after the "front of the house." He was probably his own money-taker. He knew his business according to his time. If he had lived at the present day, he would probably have been black-balled at the Garrick Club, and his play of *Much Ado about Nothing*, in spite of Dogberry and Verges, would no doubt have been rejected by half the managers of London. He was his own author first, and his own manager afterwards. His tavern was his club, and his club was his tavern. His favourite pot-house in London was the "Boar's Head" in Eastcheap. Where is that "Boar's Head" now? Gone for ever. The statue of William IV. (who has been called irreverently "Silly Billy") stands in its place—looking at that human *maëlstrom*, London Bridge, with burly composure.

GAIETY CHRONICLES

Like Shakespeare, I have been very little of an actor, but much of a commercial manager. Unlike Shakespeare, I could not mix bull-baiting with play-acting, Acts of Parliament and improved manners having otherwise provided. Like Shakespeare, I have mixed Music-Halls and Theatres with much Journalism and a little Literature. Unlike Shakespeare, I have preserved the result of my mannikin efforts. When his plays had answered his trading purpose, he left the bulk of them to the prompters, the inn-yards, or the Devil. Fortunately his prompters and associates were disciples worthy of any master, human or Divine. They preserved the immortal pages from destruction, and have been tardily but worthily honoured near the place of their birth in the city of London. The names of Hemynge and Condell are now something more than the names of two Elizabethan shadows.

The time, it seems, has now arrived when I am to pose as the Macaulay of the little world of Make-Believe,—the Gibbon of a bundle of fast-dying play-bills.

It is just possible that a certain percentage of readers who take up this Chronicle of Small-Beer may ask the question in no unfriendly spirit—Why was it ever written? They may want to know why a theatre like the Gaiety should be honoured with a history disguised under the old Holinshedian name of "Chronicle," when more interesting and important houses are waiting for their own special Herodotus.

These natural "interrogatories" have to be answered by the chronicler as fully as if they were legally "administered," but the answers are not excessively difficult. The book, or booklet, may be the first of a series, if it meets with a fair measure of encouragement. The subject was naturally chosen by the writer with the usual parental partiality, in spite of the unruly character of the offspring.

Human nature has not yet gone out of fashion.

The subject, as far as the writer is concerned, has one great drawback. He knows it only too thoroughly. There is little or no scope for fancy or imagination. A study of twenty or thirty years has accumulated a store of facts, while it has destroyed far too many illusions, and vestiges of romance.

These Chronicles are essentially Chronicles of Small-Beer. "The earth hath bubbles as the water hath, and these are of them." The spirit of the booklet is parochial. This should not be against it, if it is honestly parochial. In a very early number of the *Cornhill Magazine*, I wrote for William Makepeace Thackeray (the editor) a short article called "The Parochial Mind." In this I pointed out, to the best of my ability, that the man who cultivates his little patch of experience, as a French peasant cultivates his few square yards of productive soil,—who resolutely turns his back upon all electro-plated universality,—who has the courage to be minute even to the verge of common-place, and has no ambition to shine in encyclopædic glory, may

probably leave something behind him that the great historians of the century may welcome with gratitude. The parochial book has its useful place in the world of print and paper, though it is not given to every one to write a *Natural History of Selborne.*

In the early sixties—a period spoken of with contempt by many chroniclers of the stage, simply because a sleepy stage management had encouraged the creation of that theatrical abortion, the "Adelphi Guest,"—the central theatres, not very numerous, were far from being remarkable as models of comfort and cleanliness. The Strand Theatre was deservedly popular by reason of its entertainments (chiefly burlesque), but was a stuffy little house, in which the audience and the actors could almost shake hands across the footlights; the Olympic, always having the air of a thoroughly "minor theatre," had just recovered from the lamented death of that meteoric genius, Robson, and was rejoicing in the best adaptation from the French ever placed upon the English stage—the *Ticket-of-Leave Man*, by Tom Taylor. Lyon's Inn, in Newcastle Street, Strand, still existed, and the Globe and the Opera-Comique were neither built nor thought of; there was no Vaudeville, to be called by the cabmen the "War-Devil," and to divide the old Vestris Lyceum from the re-constructed Adelphi; Terry's little playhouse was in the womb of time, its master being at the Surrey Theatre; Her Majesty's Theatre (with its dangerous little play-house, the "Bijou," packed

somewhere in its bowels), to be burned to the ground, then rebuilt as a stately but unprofitable opera-house, and afterwards cruelly murdered, divided musical and spectacular business with Covent Garden and Drury Lane; the Princess's had acquired a classical reputation under the able and scholarly management of Charles Kean, who earned the systematic abuse of *Punch* and Douglas Jerrold; the Haymarket, with the most juicy low comedian, but unskilful manager, John Baldwin Buckstone,—the bosom friend of Charles Dickens,—was old-fashioned, but a thorough play-house, with a most uncomfortable dress-circle, from which you could only see the stage with one eye, according to the side on which you were placed, but with a snug enclosed pit, every seat being in the open, and all sighting the stage at a proper elevation, so that the occupants were justified in saying, as I did,—

> "We have been there, and still would go;
> 'Tis quite a little Heaven below!"

The small gallery in King William Street, Strand, afterwards to become a popular theatre under various managements, notably under Mr. J. L. Toole's, was only used for "one-man shows," and Ethiopian Serenaders. There was no Criterion, no Prince of Wales's, except the famous little barn in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, immortalized by the Bancroft management; there was no Shaftesbury, no Lyric, no Daly's, and no "Queen's." Toole's and the Queen's have died an

honourable death, and are both entitled to favourable epitaphs. There was no Comedy Theatre (now partially reconstructed), then the cheapest built theatre in London; there was no Garrick, built by a successful dramatic author for an admirable character actor, almost against the wishes of the noble ground landlord; there was no Avenue on the river-bank, erected in the heart of American London, under the fond impression that it would be immediately bought up for the necessary extension by the South Eastern Railway; there was no reconstructed Royalty in the *petty France* of Soho, transformed from a toy theatre into a compact playhouse; there was no Novelty in Great Queen Street, disputing the right of way with brokers' shops, the cabs of Freemasons, and the legal colony of Lincoln's Inn. There was no reconstructed St. James', where Braham's "folly" was practically rebuilt at the cost of a new theatre. There was no Duke of York's and no Savoy, the golden nursery of Gilbert and Sullivan, and a new form of comic opera.

The old theatres of the sixties were nearly all badly built, badly lighted, badly seated, with inconvenient entrances, narrow winding passages, and the most defective sanitary arrangements. They smelt of escaped gas, orange peel, tom-cats, and mephitic vapours. Drury Lane, which should have set an example, being large and claiming a *patent*, was one of the greatest offenders. The playbills were badly printed with damp ink which came off

on your hands, until a well-known perfumer, named Rimmel, appeared with scented programmes, which, if anything, were a little too aromatic. The "refreshments" consisted chiefly of an undefined ardent spirit—probably the original fire-water which exterminated the red man—and the fee-(fi-fo-fum) system was the rule everywhere.

The Strand thoroughfare is the chief street of the world. Like most ancient ways, it is narrow and snake-like. Whitechapel and the Mile End Road may rival the barbaric proportions of the Newsköi Perspective of St. Petersburg, or the Grand Place of Prague; but the Strand, if only an "alley," as the Thames is only a "ditch," has been moulded by Time and History. It is controlled by several authorities and half a dozen vestries. Its roadway and pathways are undermined by many commercial trespassers, fortified by Acts of Parliament. Gas companies, telephone companies, water companies, electric lighting companies, and others have the power to take up its wood blocks whenever they feel so disposed, and to make clay pies in the centre of its pavements. It is as badly swept as a suburban lodging-house. It is only really clean for an hour when a royal visitor makes a semi-state progress from Buckingham Palace to the Guildhall, to accept the freedom of the City. Disraeli admired and praised it, and his "English gondola"—the hansom cab—let loose empty in uncontrolled hundreds, usurps the right of way, and with the happy-go-lucky hooded cart—the demon of the streets—the

pampered promoter of bad language—defies and dislocates the legitimate traffic.

The centre of this interesting and overgorged alley is where the greasy curve of Bow Street, re-named in this link Wellington Street North, pours its railway and market-carts downhill into the Strand, to struggle across the road into Wellington Street South, and over Waterloo Bridge (now free from the halfpenny tax on suicides), on the way to South London. For more than a century London has wanted a good cross thoroughfare from north to south, and for nearly half a century it has been promised such a thoroughfare. One day it may get it.

The mouth of Wellington Street North (or "Mud-Salad Market" Hill, as it might be re-named) has two blocks of buildings—one at the west corner, the centre of which is the Lyceum Theatre, and the other at the east corner, the centre of which is the Gaiety Theatre. *Thalia* (if I may be allowed such classical allusions) is represented on one side, and *Melpomene* on the other. The hilly gorge between, too well known to drivers and horses, is the Dardanelles of the drama.

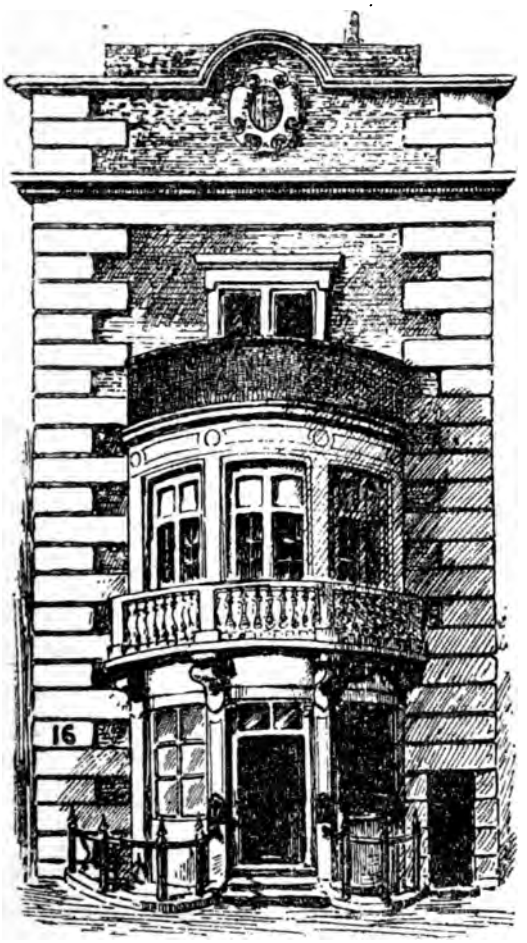
The eastern corner, which has long held, at the back, the historic premises of the *Morning Post*, presented a Strand frontage that was marked out by destiny for a metropolitan place of amusement. The frontage was part of an island of some little interest in the history of London—the history of the day before yesterday, and not the records of

remote antiquity. When the Haymarket was really a market for hay in the daytime, and had not earned its night character of the Gay-market, Catherine Street (or, as it used to be spelt, Katherine Street), the eastern boundary of the property, was a festive thoroughfare, where the chimes were heard long after midnight, from Drury Lane Theatre and the (now defunct) Albion Tavern at one end, to the Strand thoroughfare at the other. Old taverns and alamode beef shops abounded, and a private amateur theatre, where many celebrities made their first appearance, which afterwards became a flash night-house called "Jessop's," then a printing office, then one of the numerous homes of the Savage Club before it turned its Bohemian coat and cultivated a liking for clean linen and the aristocracy, stood near the middle of the street, where it stands now as the office of the *Echo* newspaper. Many of these taverns had a literary flavour. Mark Lemon kept one; a distinguished author lived and wrote so long in another without going out of the place, that when, at last, he made up his mind to face the street, his hat had been mislaid and lost, and in anger he transferred his custom to another tavern. In those days the half-past twelve o'clock closing Act of 1872 had not been invented; people went to bed when they liked, not when they were told to do so by their own servants, the police, and the scrofulous "bogus" club had not been called into existence. The Albion Tavern—now a potato warehouse and a tenement

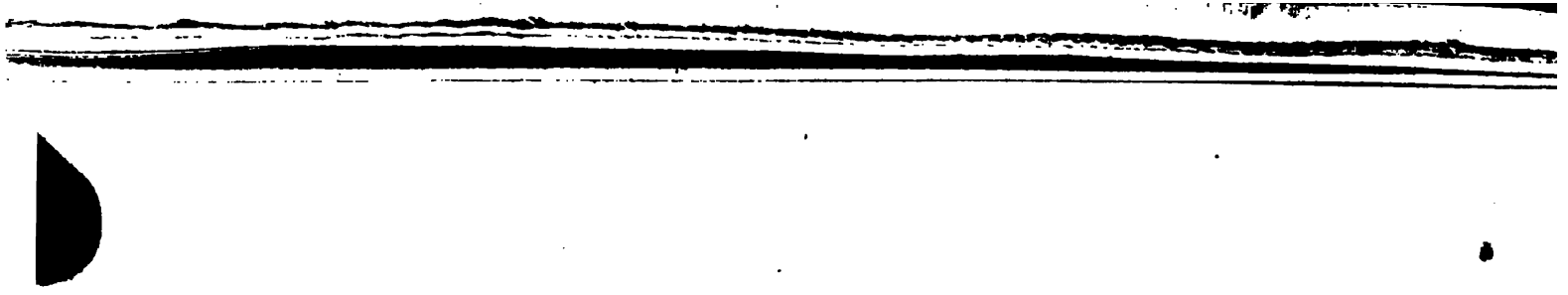
lodging-house—attracted men like Charles Dickens, who loved to dine and sup near his work and in the very heart of his beloved London.

The west side of Catherine Street saw the birth of the *Era* newspaper, a professional journal devoted to the interests of the stage, and always very ably conducted; and the *Illustrated Times*, one of the early picture papers, originated by the late Henry Vizetelly, a clever member of a large and clever family, who, in *Echoes from the Clubs*, brought out the late Edmund Yates as a "society journalist." Round in Exeter Street, on the north side of the block, stood an old tavern called the Fountain, that had seen better days, and was a poor relation of the London Coffee House on Ludgate Hill, the Crown and Anchor in the Strand, the Sablonière in Leicester Square, the Blue Posts in Cork Street, and Clunn's in Covent Garden. They all had a family likeness. There was plenty of good old polished mahogany and sound old Sheffield plate (and sometimes silver, as at "Simpson's") inside, and the rich brown entrance doors — generally mahogany—had dwarf green curtains and bright brass wire railings.

At the north-east corner of the block, on the rise of the Wellington Street Hill, was the most interesting building of all—the first public workshop of Charles Dickens. Here *Household Words* was started—the master and his faithful foreman, W. H. Wills, working together on the first floor, the upper rooms being used for little dinner parties and



"HOUSEHOLD WORDS" OFFICE, CHARLES DICKENS' FIRST WORKSHOP



suppers after the theatres. The building still exists, unchanged externally; but about ten years ago it was absorbed by the Gaiety Theatre, providing space that had long been much needed. The changes in the "local habitations" of literature, properly so called, in the neighbourhood are curious. When Charles Dickens had his well-known quarrel with his partners, Messrs. Bradbury and Evans (Sir William Agnew was not then one of the firm), he dropped *Household Words* and re-started it under the name of *All the Year Round*, taking premises a little higher up Wellington Street, at the corner of York Street, one of the twenty "York Streets" in London. These premises now are occupied by a theatrical wig and mask maker, and a music-hall and variety agent. The agent has Charles Dickens' working-rooms upstairs, and the wig-maker trades in the shop and basement. Lower down Wellington Street, nearer the Strand, the offices of the *Athenæum*, the great literary organ founded by the Dilkes—father, son, and grandson—have been surrendered to a music-hall agent, and the old *Household Words* house, after being used for several years by Sir William Howard Russell, as the editor of the *Army and Navy Gazette*, has (as I have just said) been converted into dressing-rooms and offices for the Gaiety Theatre.

Next door to the office of *Household Words*, running from Wellington Street North to Catherine Street, was a narrow passage or arcade of shops, sometimes erroneously called "Exeter Change," and

often confused with the old building in the Strand, which stood where Burleigh Street now stands, and contained Cross's Menagerie. This old, original "Change" was pulled down early in the present century for Strand improvements, and the only fragment of it remaining is an architectural scroll with a clock-dial, which stands over the shoe-shop next door to the Lyceum pit entrance.

"Exeter Arcade" was never a commercial success. Its shops were always displaying the legend "to let," and if a tenant came in one week he generally went out the next, especially if he was asked for rent. Bohemian journals, started by writers who wished to be their own editors and masters of a shop-boy, obtained a "local habitation and a name" in the *Arcade*. The journals were written in the back parlours, and sold or given away across the counters, under which some of the editors slept at night or in the early morning. At the western mouth of this arcade—in Wellington Street North—was a tall and very narrow building, such as architects call an "engaged column," with rooms like the rooms of a lighthouse, let to people who required modest chambers. Mr. J. L. Toole, at that time engaged at the New Adelphi, where he went from the Lyceum opposite, was the occupant about 1860. There he entertained his friend Henry Irving (then making a trial-trip at the Princess's Theatre) and other friends, myself amongst the number.

Next to this real Court of Bankruptcy—Exeter

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD

Arcade—was the historic office of the *Morning Post*, still existing and much enlarged, having displaced the *Field*, the *Queen*, the *Law Times*, and the rest of the group of papers founded or acquired by the late Mr. Serjeant Cox. The proprietors, by this move, obtained a great frontage at the Strand corner of Wellington Street. The oldest and quaintest of the buildings which stood on the Strand front of this block, amongst other shops of less importance, was the office of the *Mirror*, that fossil relic of the primary formation of periodical literature. It was a retiring shop, with very small old-time windows, blinking purblind at the busy and progressive thoroughfare. Its proprietor, old Mr. Limbird, peeped with wondering timidity through the dim glass, bewildered at the stream of strange traffic surging past his neglected door. In literature he represented what Miss Linwood represented in public amusements, both being survivors of the time when *Adams's Orrery* formed the legalized Lenten entertainment at the Lyceum or Adelphi, and stray sailors, thinking they were sitting at a play, wanted to know when the broadsword combat was going to begin.

This important London island, which I have walked round and briefly described, arrived at the time, in the early sixties, when it had to bow to its inevitable destiny. A music-hall was projected and built, and a portion of the island was bought for the purpose. The entrance was, of course, on the Strand front, as near the centre as possible, and

the place was called the "Strand Musick Hall." The late Mr. Syers, a gentleman of capital, education, and ability, was largely connected with it, and he showed his capacity for "variety show" management by afterwards making a small fortune at the Oxford Music Hall in Oxford Street. For various reasons, in spite of its position, the Strand Music Hall was a failure from the day of opening. Its programme, perhaps, was a little in advance of its time, and it is always a mistake to go too far ahead of your audience. The architecture of the place had something to do with it. The word *rococo* expresses much, but it never expressed half enough when used in a description of the "Strand Musick Hall." A decorator's studio, overloaded with samples picked from all nations, was the only thing the place suggested. I took the late Sir Richard Burton to see it, and he then considered his education thoroughly completed. He had seen many things, but never, under one roof, anything like this very remarkable building.

The "Strand Musick Hall" soon went into liquidation. The management had much to do with this unsatisfactory ending, but most probably the place was supplied a few years before it was wanted. The Music-hall grub, in those days, had not developed into the Theatre of Variety butterfly, although the "Canterbury" at Lambeth, known as the "Royal Academy over the Water," had been in existence for more than ten years: a credit to its able founder and manager, Mr. Charles Morton.

C. J. PHIPPS

No one had the courage to take the hall and carry on the amusement business on more popular lines. This is a fact that is worthy of a marked record, as there are always many hundreds of people of average intelligence who think they can drive a gig, edit a newspaper, or manage a theatre. The place was dismantled and put up "to let," and at the sale by auction the plate, glass, and linen of a large restaurant were sold, which proved that part of the original design was to provide eating and drinking in combination with music and singing.

The empty premises were not long without a purchaser, who kept his name concealed, and did not appear to be in any hurry to utilize his property. The secret was well kept, until the proper time arrived to disclose it. By that time all the houses in the eastern section of Exeter Street (south side), including the old Fountain Tavern, but leaving the public-house at the corner of Catherine Street and Exeter Street; the Arcade of Impecuniosity, miscalled "Exeter Change," several houses on the west side of Catherine Street, from this corner public-house towards the Strand, excluding the *Era* and *Illustrated Times* offices, and all the shops in the Strand (not many) from the Strand corner of Catherine Street up to the *Field* and *Queen* offices, on each side of the Strand Music Hall entrance, had been acquired by a mysterious capitalist. The secret purchaser of these properties was Mr. Lionel Lawson, part proprietor of the *Daily Telegraph* newspaper, whose idea was to build a

moderately-sized and improved theatre, with a restaurant attached, to be called the Gaiety.

Mr. Lawson employed a rising architect (Mr. C. J. Phipps), who had previously built the Queen's Theatre for him in Long Acre. They went over to Paris together, and took as their model the Théâtre Lyrique, in the Place du Châtelet, copying the projecting balcony, with small private boxes round the back, instead of the old-fashioned "dress-circle," kept in a line with the supporting columns. Their theatre was practically open on four sides, though neither the Lord Chamberlain nor the Metropolitan Board of Works insisted, at that time, on any such structural conditions. The plan of the house and its title were settled before I heard that such a theatre was to be erected, and I am not, therefore, entitled to any credit that may attach to its construction. The idea of joining a restaurant to the theatre, where people could dine and walk from their dinner into the playhouse, or, after the performance, could walk from the playhouse into the restaurant to supper, was Mr. Lawson's, not mine.

I first heard of the proposed theatre from Mr. Dion Boucicault, who suggested that I should make an offer for the tenancy. I was on friendly terms with Mr. Lawson, and had written occasionally for the *Daily Telegraph*. I had been the stage director of the Alhambra for nearly three years, and had much to do in shaping the entertainments at that Palace of Varieties in the form they bear at present. I did not pose as a capitalist, particularly before a

reputed millionaire and a man of financial genius. I treated my means as a joke, but I got the theatre. A literary friend, of all people, whipped up a small syndicate of companions to support me, and we were duly registered as the "New Theatres Company, Limited; Capital, £5,000." The lease was in my name individually, and a board was soon painted and stuck up on the Strand front: "The Gaiety Theatre. This house, when completed, will be opened under the direction of Mr. John Hollingshead." Many people who saw the announcement wondered who John Hollingshead was, as my name had never appeared in connexion with the Alhambra. I passed my apprenticeship there anonymously. Many who knew me only knew me as "one of those writing chaps," and as "writing chaps" were not common as theatre directors in London as they are in Paris, they were no doubt not inclined to bid much for my chances of success. One brother journalist—I trust by a slip of the pen—called me "*a* Mr. Hollingshead."

The first thing I did was to buy a cylinder writing-desk with plenty of pigeon-holes, a cheap working piano, and a few chairs, including one office-chair, with a seat that revolved on its own axis. These were placed in a large room facing the Strand, the only carpet being mortar dust and broken bricks. It was a room intended to form part of the Strand Music Hall restaurant, and it commanded a view of the "works" at the back, where the contractor was digging out the foundations of the future theatre.

The same people who wondered why I had seized the position of a theatrical manager, not being an actor, a box-office keeper, or an ambitious publican, but merely a literary hack, an anonymous scribbler, and an equally anonymous manager of a music hall, no doubt wondered why a capitalist like Mr. Lionel Lawson, with no particular lady *protégée* connected with the stage, no dramas to be produced, written or purchased, and with the whole "money market" practically at his feet, should have turned his financial attention to theatrical "bricks and mortar." The explanation is very simple. Mr. Lawson was accustomed to think for himself, and was a man always a little in advance of his time. He was not tired of the respectable monotony of the so-called "Three per Cents," as he never looked at them. He sought for something more productive. He was too shrewd and cautious to listen to the voice of the promoter, not so prominent in 1867 as some years afterwards, and he naturally turned his eye occasionally on bricks and mortar. Bricks and mortar, as a rule, mean shops and dwelling-houses, to people not accustomed to think for themselves. Mr. Lawson thought for himself, and grasped the possibilities of theatrical landlordism.

There is no pounds, shillings, and pence investment known to "those in the trade" that can equal the building of a right theatre at the right time and in the right place. The builder must not pay too much for his ground, but must select, if possible, a cleared site. If he buys buildings to pull down and

"PROSPERITY"

make a site, he must see that the rentals are not too heavy—that the property is not a fancy property. Every rental pulled down goes to swell the natural ground rent. That is a mathematical demonstration.

The theatre builder does not want a frontage like a new bank or a new hotel. He wants access to a chief thoroughfare, if he can get it, or a thoroughfare that is in the full tide of progress, and he can build his temple of the drama on a back stable yard and the storehouses of ashes and vegetable refuse. A twenty feet frontage will fulfil the requirements of the licensing authorities, and this will save him the expense of a Renaissance elevation, with the inevitable and conventional "Mansard" towers. He must be careful about "ancient lights," and more ancient cesspools. The latter mean future trouble, the former present litigation. In old neighbourhoods these "lights"—often the property of poor landlords and poorer tenants—are generally in the hands of some local jobbing solicitor, who undertakes to defend the "rights" as speculative business.

The investor as theatre builder will select a sound architect, but will not "give him his head." He will know the size of his ground and what he can put upon it, and if he is wise he will not go too far towards heaven with his gallery (on a limited foundation), as the sixpenny or shilling audiences object to look down upon a stage from the top of a monument, only to get a view of the heads of actors, and

study how their wigs are parted. He will so edit his architect that there are no columns and architectural projections put in for building effect and the perpetual annoyance of humble playgoers, as a sacrifice to the spirit of Vitruvius, and to justify many days of pupilage in Greece and Rome. He will keep steadily in mind that a theatre should be a place in which so many people can sit, see, hear, and breathe. He should provide the utmost possible sanitary decency and comfort, not only for audiences in front of the curtain, but for actors and actresses behind the curtain—decent dressing-rooms, a comfortable green-room, and a plentiful supply of water. It is not necessary that a theatre should stink of escaped gas, orange peel, and stale printers' ink, any more than it should smell of scented programmes. It is not necessary, when visitors enter the magic portals, that they should sneeze as if they were in a snuff factory. Neither is it necessary, at the bidding of a panic-stricken licensing authority, that every outer wall should be pierced with "exits in case of fire," until in place of one problematical death in half a century, you kill off a dozen playgoers a week with catarrh and pneumonia.

The position of the capitalist as a landlord—not as a theatrical speculator—will be unique and peculiar. If he honestly builds on the plan I have sketched out, he will have a model theatre, and, model or no model, he will have a dozen offers for tenancy before his ground floor has begun to show itself, or he has finally decided on a name for his

dramatic temple. While holders of house property have to wait for their rent, he will always have his dues three months in advance, and will hold this deposit "quarter" till the end of the lease, or the day of judgment. While owners of house property have to sue for "dilapidations," he will have a sum —probably £1,000—placed in a bank by his eager tenant as security for legal covenants, the money standing in the joint-names of owner and occupier. While owners of house property have a right of entry reserved in the lease for the inspection of unruly drains, or stopping the bursting of unruly water-pipes, he will not only have the right of entry to the theatre, at all times, before and behind the curtain, but the right for ever to the sole use and occupancy of one private box and two orchestral stalls, with probably a power of writing orders for the dress circle. His tenant will relieve him of the troublesome duty of paying rates, taxes, and insurance, and will undertake, when the lease expires and possession of the theatre is given up, to leave enough stock in scenery, dresses, "properties," and machinery, for the next tenant to enter into a furnished and "going concern," and to begin the ordinary business. To secure this last covenant, most theatrical leases provide that nothing of this kind—"fixtures" or not fixtures—having once gone into a theatre shall go out of it again without the knowledge and consent of the landlord. The return for this *maximum* of security and this *minimum* of risk is a percentage that would make a

house-owner's mouth water. It varies from 10 to 20 per cent. *per annum*, the average probably being about 15 per cent. When a tenant breaks down or finishes his tenancy, there is no difficulty in finding another, and an unusual closure of a few weeks, or even months, is amply covered by "solid deposits."

Mr. C. J. Phipps, the architect, Mr. Gordon, the scenic artist, and Mr. Robert Bell, the decorator, with the contractors, began their Gaiety labours in the early summer of 1868, allowing about seven months for the completion of the building. The area on which the theatre was to be erected—the front part belonging to the Strand Music Hall, what was left of it, being devoted to the main passages and staircase, and the back part in Exeter Street to the stage and *auditorium*—was in a very fair sanitary condition. The site was a natural slope, rising from the Strand to the back, so that the ground floor of the theatre was on a level with the first-floor of the frontage.

The theatre was to be called the *Gaiety*, after the Parisian house of the same name. The title had to be played up to. It scarcely pointed to Shakespeare, but it favoured Taste and the Musical Glasses. In the despised "sixties" the minor theatres opened at six and began at half-past, and the central theatres opened at half-past six and began at seven. This involved what is called a "triple bill"—three pieces in one evening. The Lyceum in the Mathews-Vestris days often had five pieces. My

ALFRED WIGAN

scheme for the new theatre was to give as much variety as possible, and I decided that the first piece should be musical — a short operetta—the second piece a drama or comedy, and the concluding piece a short burlesque of some little musical pretension. This abstract programme involved a double, if not a triple company, and I was there prepared to engage them.

My first engagement was that of Mr. Alfred Wigan, without his wife. They generally formed a brace; but, on this occasion, I wanted the gentleman but not the lady. She was an actress of great ability, and quite as clever off the stage as on it. She clung a little too tenaciously to the skirts of "society"—a weakness that existed even in the despised "sixties"—and was very fond of talking about "the dear duke," and "her dear duchess," as if she had lived in Mayfair all her life, and had always been clothed in purple and fine linen. As a matter of fact, like many of her profession, she had passed through a very hard and severe apprenticeship, had known what labour and privation meant, and had not skipped on to the stage from a boarding-school over a bridge well padded with Axminster carpet.

Mr. Alfred Wigan had been brought up, it was understood, as a private tutor, and had learned French thoroughly. He was a dry, unsympathetic actor in sentimental parts, which he rarely attempted; but he was an admirable comedian, with a keen sense of character, and unequalled in old Frenchmen. His seedy, scheming, anxious father

in *The First Night*—"Le Père de la Débutante"—was a creation worthy to rank by the side of Samuel Phelps's "Sir Pertinax Macsycophant." No higher praise can be given. As managers, notably of the old Olympic in the "fifties," the Wigans, husband and wife, were very successful, producing several pieces by Tom Taylor—adaptations, of course—which have taken something like a permanent position on the stage. They had the valuable assistance of Frederick Robson, the second meteoric genius of the century—Edmund Kean being the first—and they were both, but particularly Mrs. Alfred Wigan, under the delusion that they had discovered this wonder as a rough diamond, and had cut and polished him until he became a "gem of the purest ray serene." Theatrical history, however, was against them. Frederick Robson had proved his genius at the Grecian Saloon Theatre at Hoxton in the "forties," and had confirmed this proof before the most critical audience in London at the Olympic under the management of the elder Farren, at the beginning of the "fifties."

In engaging Mr. Alfred Wigan as my "leading man," I found that with all his gentlemanly training and pretensions, he was a real professional at heart as regards benefits. He saw no degradation in "sending round the hat" once a year, and in this I am bound to say he was supported by the custom of the time, and the practice of his leading companions. The benefit system originated in the so-called "palmy days" of the drama, and was

MADGE ROBERTSON (MRS KENDAL)

certainly sanctified by antiquity, if by nothing else. It still lingers about the playhouse like the fee system and other time-honoured observances. In my arrangements with Mr. Alfred Wigan I entered a protest against benefits, if I could do no more. I was always a tilter at windmills. I assessed the value of an annual benefit at two hundred and fifty pounds, and gave my leading man an increased *honorarium* as an equivalent.

After the leading man came the leading lady—perhaps, as an act of politeness, she ought to have come first. The choice fell upon Miss Madge Robertson (who subsequently became Mrs. Kendal), a young actress of great charm and talent, who was almost born in a green-room, and had thoroughly learnt her art in the best school—that of varied experience. Her family was essentially a theatrical family, and her brother was Tom Robertson, who had not long been discovered by the Bancrofts and Henry J. Byron as a graceful, original, and popular dramatist.

My "leading boy" was, of course, a girl, Miss Ellen Farren, the bearer of a name justly honoured in theatrical history. She had begun her career very young at the Victoria Theatre "over the water," once called the "Coburg," when it was built, and often run as a chapel-of-ease to Drury Lane Theatre. When Miss E. Farren was there, it was known as the "Vic" in abbreviated speech, and as "Queen Victoria's Own Theatre" in Arthur Sketchley's amusing character sketch — "Mrs.

Brown at the Play." Its leading actress was generally described as the "acknowledged heroine of domestic drama," and the theatre was associated in the public mind with a form of drama that bore the distinctive title of "Blood and Thunder." The acting was often coarse, but it had to be genuine. The "Vic" was not a licensed temple of make-believe. The audience paid for excitement, and they were not to be fobbed off with deportment. Their manners, especially when *Oliver Twist* was performed and a physical force "Bill Sikes" "let himself go" in the murder of Nancy, would have opened the eyes of an Easter Sunday crowd in the Bull-ring of Madrid, or the four guinea a head mob that attended the fight between Sayers and Heenan. It was a good school for "Nelly" Farren.

In 1864, or thereabouts, when Miss Rainham, the creator of "Sam Willoughby" in the *Ticket-of-Leave Man*, left the Olympic for the Strand, Miss E. Farren, then engaged to be married to Mr. Robert Soutar, a member of the company, took her position in the Olympic theatre, and the best adaptation from the French on the English stage—Tom Taylor's play, which had reconciled the public to the melancholy death of Robson—was revived for her to show her ability as Miss Rainham's successor. She leaped at once into popularity, and was entrusted with a number of parts in drama and burlesque which gradually increased her reputation.

Miss E. Farren and her husband, Mr. Robert

Soutar, entered into an engagement with me for the Gaiety Theatre, then in course of construction (she as leading "boy" and "chamber-maid," and he as stage-manager and comedian), which was destined to last for many years. As dramatic critic of the *Daily News* I had seen their work and knew its value, particularly Miss Farren's. Mr. Soutar had been brought up as a journalist, his father having long been the working editor of the *Morning Advertiser*. Mr. Robert Soutar had not been very long upon the stage, and gained a good deal of his experience at Brighton. He had made a hit at the Olympic as "Green Jones," in the *Ticket-of-Leave Man*, by imitating a well-known Brighton character.

In 1868 it was not the practice of theatrical managers to seek for talent in the music-halls, but rather to regard those establishments, then just keeping above the theatrical horizon, as illegitimate theatres, to be prosecuted from time to time for infringing the Stage-Play Act. Mr. Benjamin Webster and Mr. Horace Wigan, a brother of Mr. Alfred Wigan, were the ostensible leaders of the Anti-Music-Hall Crusade, but they were actively supported by Mr. John Baldwin Buckstone and many influential and old-fashioned managers throughout the country. I notoriously belonged to the opposite camp. As stage director of the Alhambra, I had produced a pantomimic ballet of the kind now allowed everywhere with impunity, which was considered such an outrage, that my Theatre of Varieties was summoned and fined by

the sitting magistrate at Marlborough Street twenty pounds a performance—in all £240 and costs—a judgment that was confirmed on appeal at the Quarter Sessions. The only Court to "move" after this decision was the House of Commons, and the Special Committee who met and received evidence in 1866 (before which I was examined, as I was again in 1892) reported in favour of removing all dramatic restrictions on music-halls. The report of 1866, like a similar report in 1892, has never been acted upon. They still encumber the House of Commons Library as Blue Books.

Wanting people who could sing, and yet act and dance, it seemed to me natural that I should go to the music-halls; but natural or not, I went to them, and engaged Miss Constance Loseby, who had been with me at the Alhambra, and Miss Tremaine, another music-hall vocalist. Mr. Charles Lyall, who came from Covent Garden, and had the reputation of being even a better light actor than he was a singer, was engaged as a tenor. The selection of a full and competent orchestra, a small *corps de ballet*, with a principal dancer from Paris, Mdlle. Bossi, a small but efficient chorus, a pair of accomplished pantomimists and comic dancers, Messrs. Dauban and Warde, and a musical conductor from the opera —M. Kettenus—(who was to be followed in a few weeks by Herr Meyer Lutz), were important details of the Gaiety opening programme. The author of the first burlesque was Mr. W. S. Gilbert, the writer of the *Bab Ballads*, who has since made fame and

ROBERT SOUTAR

fortune at the Savoy Theatre. The subject he decided upon was *Robert the Devil.* A contract for all the scenery was made with Mr. William Grieve, probably the best landscape artist of his time, though inferior and conventional as a painter of interiors. Another artist, more associated with the periodical press than with theatres—Captain Alfred Thompson—offered his valuable assistance, which I gladly accepted. Captain Thompson had been in the Enniskillen Dragoons (he was a nephew of Colonel Perronet Thompson, the politico-economical writer), but he had studied art in Munich and Paris, and had caught the continental style of illustration, associated with the name of Grévin. He designed the costumes for the opening burlesque, and for the first time this light form of entertainment was treated with artistic respect and consideration. Captain Thompson's designs were essentially French, and a little overburdened with detail; but for delicate and harmonious combinations of colour, mostly half-tints, he was quite unrivalled. He got his first chance at the Gaiety, and the Gaiety had the great advantage of his taste and judgment, not to say genius. The old coarse costume combinations—strong reds, strong greens, strong blues, and strong yellows—were doomed from the hour that Alfred Thompson's dresses appeared before the footlights.

While these arrangements for the initial programme of the theatre were being made in the room carpeted with brick-dust, the builders, pushing on

as rapidly as possible with their work, met with their first serious difficulty. They were threatened with an injunction by the proprietors of the *Morning Post*—one of the few buildings left untouched on the Wellington Street side—for blocking out light and air. The shell of the theatre had got to a certain height without a protest being entered, but it had to go double that height to complete the design, and this elevation, it was thought, would overshadow the editorial rooms and offices. The managing director and acting proprietor, Mr. Algernon Borthwick (afterwards Sir Algernon Borthwick, and now Lord Glenesk), was a friendly opponent. He was dealing with a brother newspaper proprietor, Mr. Lionel Lawson; and I was an old contributor of the paper, having been its Special Commissioner at the East End of London during the never-to-be-forgotten famine year of 1861. In spite, however, of these softening influences, we mistrusted the legal advisers of the paper, when it came to a question of the rights of property. A council of bricks and mortar was held, and it was quietly resolved to finish the objectionable part of the building before an interim injunction could be applied for. Plans were laid, materials were collected—bricks, joists, girders, window-frames, and everything necessary were got ready. In daily newspaper offices, Saturday is a *dies non*. From six o'clock on a Saturday morning to about two o'clock on a Sunday afternoon, the *Morning Post*, it was known, was given up to a caretaker, who had little more to do than to take

care of himself, and answer one or two reporters who might call for letters. The *dies non* was seized; a crowd of well-disciplined workmen attended at daybreak on Saturday morning, timbers were laid, girders were put in position, bricks were piled up, mortar and cement were trowelled into their proper spaces, window-frames were inserted, and by Sunday mid-day, when the editorial staff came to their duties, to get ready for the Monday's issue, they looked out of their windows and saw that the objectionable block was completed, and far beyond the reach of any earthly vice-chancellor. An action for damages was on the cards, but it was never set in motion, and the injury to light and air proved, after all, to be less real than imaginary.

In spite of this indication of exceptional energy on the part of the builders, it soon became evident that the contractors and architect had been a little too sanguine about completing their work in a given time. I had announced the opening of the theatre for the *21st December*, 1868, and I determined to keep my promise. No one suggested an alteration of the date, for they knew it would not be listened to. Possession of a completed or half-completed stage for the rehearsals generally considered necessary, was out of the question. The scenery was being painted in Mr. Grieve's studio in Macklin Street, Drury Lane, a thoroughfare inhabited by burglars, pick-pockets, and ticket-of-leave men; the dresses were being made in two or three costumiers' work-shops; the chorus was being

rehearsed in certain rooms in Leicester Square, the ballet were practising in the supper-room at "Evans's" in Covent Garden, the operetta and the burlesque were being rehearsed on the stage of Astley's Theatre (a theatre now destroyed), and the comedy-drama—an English version of *L'Escamoteur*, by Alfred Thompson, called *On the Cards*—was rehearsed in various rooms in various places. Three weeks before the theatre was to open, the painting-rooms in Macklin Street were burnt down, and the scenery, which was almost ready, was nearly all destroyed. An empty floor-cloth factory in a gusty field at Camberwell was hired as a temporary *studio*, and the scenery had to be painted again. A week before the theatre opened, many practical men, including railway managers, looked at the building, and said it would never be ready, and backed their opinions with their money. I covered their bets, and had the satisfaction of keeping my promise, and winning the stakes.

CHAPTER II

The Opening—No Fees

THE total cost of the Gaiety Theatre, as a building, was £15,000. Some allowance must be made for the low rates for labour and material existing in 1868. The original rental, with two of the best stage-boxes in the ground tier, reserved by the landlord, communicating with a small ante-room under the Royal box, and having the use of the private Royal entrance, was £3,500 a year, and this *without bars*, which belonged (and still belong) to the *restaurant's* half of the lease. This reservation of the drinking department practically increased the rent another £1,000 a year—making £4,500 a year. As the tenant, I paid rates, taxes, insurance, including the land-tax (redeemed), storage for scenery outside the theatre, and carriage to and fro, making at least another £1,000 a year. When, owing to the sudden death of Mr. Lionel Lawson, the two proprietary boxes were thrown into the theatre, the rent, by arrangement, was increased another £500 a year, so that I stood altogether to pay annually about £6,000. The rent of the theatre, which I punctually paid for

eighteen years, according to my calculations, bought the freehold of the ground from the Marquis of Exeter, built and furnished the theatre up to the starting-point, and gave the landlord a bonus of £18,000.

As I am dealing with facts, and not with theories, I may quote a few figures for the comfort of would-be theatrical investors. I am not writing to persuade capitalists to build theatres, as I am notoriously far more careful of other people's money than I am of my own. I am writing to dispel an illusion that theatrical trade differs from every other kind of trade—that the laws of supply and demand are not applicable to "mummers" and their places of business—that there are already too many theatres in London, meaning a small part of central London—illusions that will not bear the quotation of existing rentals, to say nothing of the list of distinguished and responsible actor-managers who are waiting patiently for the existing Temples—those that are "eligible"—to be disengaged.

A few facts about other theatres, the building of which was directly encouraged by the Gaiety, have a bearing on this financial question.

The Comedy Theatre, in Panton Street, according to evidence given some years ago in a law court, was built and opened for £6,000. The ground rent was not stated; but Panton Street and Oxenden Street, twenty years ago, were not a costly district. The Comedy Theatre, of course, has since been much altered and improved.

The Lyric Theatre, in Shaftesbury Avenue, was largely built upon municipal ground, bearing a rental just over £1,000 a year. Some houses in a back street were bought, and the old *Café de L'Étoile*, in Windmill Street, was thrown into the site. The freehold of the municipal ground was eventually bought, probably at twenty-five years' purchase, and the whole is now said to be mortgaged for £90,000. In certain legal proceedings lately in the Bankruptcy Court, the rent was stated to be £8,000 per annum.

The Shaftesbury Theatre, in Shaftesbury Avenue, was built upon municipal ground, bearing a rental of £800 a year. The theatre was said to have been constructed and opened for £17,000. If the same terms in proportion were accepted for the ground as were accepted for the Lyric, this would put the freehold value at £37,000. The house has been frequently let at £100 a week, notably to Mr. Willard, who paid the same rent for the Garrick. These lettings were not temporary, but for considerable periods.

Mr. D'Oyly Carte's Theatre, now "The Palace of Varieties," stands on municipal ground, rented at a little over £1,200 a year, which may or may not have been turned into a freehold. On the neighbouring terms this would be £30,000. The building was a fancy building, constructed for an Opera House, and cost a fancy price.

The Prince of Wales's Theatre, in Coventry Street, a smaller house than the Lyric, has always been let

at large, and sometimes at enormous, rentals. Mrs. Langtry had it at two periods of six months each, paying at the rate of £12,000 per annum. The Kendal tenancy of the Garrick Theatre no doubt showed a rental a little higher than Mr. Willard paid; but I have said enough to show that theatrical bricks and mortar, far from being a speculation, are something more than what is called a "dead certainty." They are, in the language of to-day, a Klondyke—a living treasure.

About three or four o'clock on the afternoon of Monday, the 21st of December, 1868, the straggling parts of the little Gaiety army came together on the Gaiety stage before the contractor's men had departed. Some of these men pretended to be at work, and others lingered in the hope of seeing a full rehearsal. In this they were disappointed. Dresses were tried on, and their wearers came up or down to the wings, according to whether they dressed upstairs or down, in the "flies" or on the "mezzaine floor" (pronounced "mazarine" by theatrical workmen), paraded before the management, and then left the scene, after suggestions, in company with one of the wardrobe sempstresses. The stage-manager, Mr. Robert Soutar, new to the place, took possession of a Royal ante-room, which communicated with the stage, and was hardly satisfied with the explanation that the room belonged to the *auditorium* side of the curtain. About twenty minutes past six the last of the lingering workmen filed out with the implements of their handicraft,

EMILY FOWLER

leaving a trail of lime-dust behind them. They filed off the stage, but not out of the house, and took up a firm position, with their implements, in the front rows of the upper balcony. When the acting manager remonstrated with them before he opened the various doors to the public, they declined to move, and said they had built the [adjective] theatre, and they meant to see it opened. The difficulty was reported to me, and I recognised a certain amount of justice in their contention. They were allowed to remain, and see the [adjective] theatre opened.

A theatrical chronicle often consists of nothing but playbills, the most stupendous work of this kind being Genest's *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration to* 1830, ten volumes of playbills, collected and tabulated by the old Bath clergyman in 1832. This curious book has been of immense use to me and other dramatic critics and reporters in the exercise of our trade, and I owe it a debt of gratitude. At the same time I will strive not to overload this book with playbills, but just give as many as will help the theatrical historian of the future.

The original prospectus of the Gaiety Theatre ran as follows:—

THE GAIETY THEATRE,
Strand

(Designed by C. J. Phipps, Esq., F.S.A., decorated by George Gordon, Esq., stage and machinery by Mr. Tasker, contractor Mr. Simpson), will be OPENED on MONDAY, Dec. 21, 1868, under the lesseeship and management of Mr. John Hollingshead.

The theatre, containing upwards of 2,000 seats, has been built with every regard for the public convenience, and has been decorated and furnished in the most costly and artistic style. All box, booking, and other fees will (with the necessary assistance of the public) be thoroughly abolished, and the performances will always conclude at a reasonable hour.

The Company consists of
Mr. ALFRED WIGAN,
Miss MADGE ROBERTSON,
M. STUART
(From the Odéon, Gaieté, and Porte St. Martin Theatres, Paris),
Miss E. FARREN,
Mr. C. LYALL
(from Her Majesty's Opera),
Miss CONSTANCE LOSEBY,
Mr. ROBERT SOUTAR
(Stage Manager),
Miss E. FOWLER,
Mr. MACLEAN,
Miss MAUDE ELLIOTT,
Miss A. TREMAINE,
Miss LILIAN HASTINGS,
Miss LITTON,
Mr. R. BARKER,
Mr. ELDRED,
Mr. JOSEPH ROBINS,
Mr. GRIFFITHS,
Mr. R. TEESDALE,
Mr. J. REEVES,
Miss A. LISTER,
Miss L. HENRIE,
Mr. BOLTON.

THE OPENING

THE BALLET

Will be principally selected from the Royal Italian Opera.

Principal Dancer:

Mdlle. BOSSI

(From the Porte St. Martin Theatre, Paris; and the Opera House of Rio de Janeiro).

Principal Grotesque Dancers and Pantomimists:

Mr. JOHN DAUBAN

and

Mr. JOHN WARDE.

THE CHORUS

Will be selected from the two chief Opera Houses, and the Vocal Music will be under the direction of

Mr. J. PITTMAN.

THE ORCHESTRA

Will be most full and efficient, under the direction of

M. KETTENUS

(From Her Majesty's Opera).

THE SCENERY

Will be painted by and under the direction of

Messrs. T. GRIEVE and SON;

And the elaborate Costumes have been designed by Alfred Thompson, Esq.; the Act Drop painted by George Gordon, Esq.; and the Proscenium Fresco by H. S. Marks, Esq.

The Lobbies supplied with Scented Fountains by Rimmel.

The Opening Pieces will be

THE TWO HARLEQUINS,

An Operetta in one Act, by M. E. Jonas (the English words by G. A'Beckett, Esq.); the principal parts in which will be sustained by Mr. C. Lyall and Miss Constance Loseby.

ON THE CARDS,

A Comedy-Drama, in three Acts (adapted from *L'Escamoteur*) in which Mr. Alfred Wigan, M. Stuart, Miss Madge Robertson, and Miss E. Farren will represent the chief characters.

ROBERT LE DIABLE,

An original Operatic Extravaganza, by W. S. Gilbert, Esq., which will be supported by the whole Comic, Vocal, and Pantomimic strength of the Company.

The Burlesque will include Two Ballets.

Doors open at 6.30. Performances to commence punctually at 7.—Box office open from 10 to 5.

No booking or other fees.

Prices: Orchestra Stalls, 7*s.*; Balcony Stalls, 5*s.*; Private Boxes, £1 11*s.* 6*d.* and £2 2*s.*; Upper Boxes, 4*s.*; Pit, 2*s.*; Gallery, 1*s.*

Grand entrance to Stalls and Boxes, in the Strand; Pit and Gallery Entrances, in Catherine Street; Royal Entrance, in Exeter Street; and Stage Entrance, in Wellington Street.

*** Places may always be secured at Mitchell's, Chappell's, Bubb's, and the chief libraries.

NOTE.—The Saloons will be opened on the same night (Dec. 21, 1868), and will communicate with the theatre on every level. The extensive Café and Restaurant attached to the theatre will be opened in a few weeks.

NOTICE.—The BOX-LISTS will be OPENED on THURSDAY, December 17th.—GAIETY THEATRE, Strand.

Amongst my guests on the first night were, Sir Benjamin and Lady Phillips, Montagu Williams, Miss Herbert, Dr. Howard Russell, Gilbert A'Beckett, Edmund Yates, Augustus Harris (the father), Hepworth Dixon, Tom Taylor, Tom Robert-

son, Watts Phillips, Dion Boucicault, Mr. Ponsonby Fane, Campbell Clarke, George Grossmith (the father), Edmund Routledge, Algernon Borthwick, Tom Hood (the younger), Shirley Brooks, Arthur Sullivan, Percy Doyle, Mark Lemon, J. B. Buckstone, Bayle Bernard, Charles Dickens (Junior), and others. Most of these guests are dead, and some have been raised to the peerage; but I give their simple names as in their letters of acceptation. The letter from Charles Dickens may have a slight literary value, and I will therefore print it. He was a "showman" himself at that time, and was out on one of his reading tours :—

"CARRICK'S ROYAL HOTEL, GLASGOW,

Tuesday, Fifteenth December, 1868.

MY DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,—

I send you many thanks for your kind remembrance of me. But as I do not leave Scotland until Sunday morning, and have to make a visit on my way home, I cannot be in town in sufficient time to accept the box you place at my disposal. I hasten therefore to return it.

With all good wishes,

Believe me, faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, ESQ."

One very brief newspaper notice may be quoted as evidence that the new theatre was successfully opened.

From the *Daily Telegraph*, December 22, 1868 :—

"Filled at an early hour by an audience which might be fairly described as a representative assemblage composed of the votaries of Art in all its varied forms, the Gaiety Theatre was opened last evening at the precise date fixed for the event several weeks before. The brilliant appearance of the house, the general excellence of the arrangements made by the lessee and manager, Mr. John Hollingshead, and the perfect success which attended the novelties of the night, furnished substantial reasons for commendation and congratulation. The programme comprised a sparkling one-act operetta, called *The Two Harlequins*, composed by M. E. Jonas; a comedy-drama in three acts, adapted from *L'Escamoteur*, and renamed *On the Cards*; and a new operatic extravaganza, by Mr. W. S. Gilbert, giving a fresh version of the old legend of *Robert le Diable*. As it would be impossible at such a late hour to render adequate justice to the three new pieces thus successively produced, we reserve a detailed account of the performances for another occasion. Some admirable acting, and an unusually extensive and effective vocal and ballet company, fully attested the judgment and liberality of the new manager, and the audience proved enthusiastic in their appreciation of all the exertions which had been so strenuously made to secure their comfort and ensure their amusement. The new theatre opened under the most favourable circumstances; and the extreme elegance of the structure, the commodious ap-

proaches to every part of the house, and the perfect enjoyment of all fortunate enough to obtain admission, will be so many strong inducements for the rest of the playgoing public to rapidly avail themselves of the peculiar advantages here afforded."

The opening programme may be given in detail. This formed the material for the "Valentine Programmes," February 14th, 1869, many of them printed on fans and presented to the public—the first of the "Souvenir Programmes," I believe, that are now so general and so popular.

GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND.

Under the Lesseeship and Management of Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

This Evening, at 7 o'clock, a New Operetta. Music by E. JONAS, English Words by GILBERT A'BECKETT, Esq., entitled

THE TWO HARLEQUINS.

Harlequin ... ... Mr. CHARLES LYALL
Columbine ... ... MISS CONSTANCE LOSEBY

Assisted by a Full Band and Chorus. Scene: À LA WATTEAU

After which at 7.45, a New Comic Drama, in three acts (adapted from *L'Escamoteur*), called

ON THE CARDS.

Sir Gilbert Ethelward ... ... Mr. MACLEAN
Guy Chilstone ... (his Private Secretary) Mr. TEESDALE
Arnold De-Bry ... ... (Attaché) M. WILLIAM STUART
Adolphe Chavillard { (Professor of Legerdemain) } Mr. ALFRED WIGAN
Sprightley ... (his Attendant) ... Miss E. FARREN

Watson ... ... (a Butler) ... Mr. NORTON
Florence Ethelward ... ... Miss MADGE ROBERTSON
Mrs. Cureton ... ... Miss LITTON
Butts ... ... (a Maid) ... Miss CONWAY

Guests, Servants, etc.

Scene laid in or near London. Time—Present.

Act I.—*THE FORCED CARD.*

Scene—Sir Gilbert's Drawing-room, Wimbledon.

Act II.—*THE RUB.* Scene—Lodgings near the Strand.

Act III.—*WON BY HONOURS.* Scene—Inn at Dover.

To conclude with a New Operatic Extravaganza, by W. S. GILBERT, Esq., called

ROBERT THE DEVIL.

Robert ... ... Miss E. FARREN
Bertram ... ... Mr. R. BARKER
Raimbault ... ... Miss C. LOSEBY
Gobetto ... ... Mr. J. ELDRED
Ferdinando ... ... Miss L. HENRIE
Bertuccio ... ... Miss ALICE LISTER
Old Bailey, King John, etc. ... ... Mr. J. ROBINS / Mr. EVERETT
(Wax Figures from Chamber of Horrors)
Albert ... ... Miss TREMAINE
The Mysterious Fiddlers ... Messrs. D'AUBAN & WARDE
Princess Isabella ... ... Miss LILLIAN HASTINGS
Alice ... ... Miss E. FOWLER

Ballet, Chorus, etc., etc.

BALLET by Madame ANNA BOSSI, and Messrs. D'AUBAN & WARDE.

Doors open at 6.30. Performance to commence punctually at 7. Box Office open from 10 to 5. *No Booking or other Fees.*

Prices: Orchestra Stalls, 7*s.*; Balcony Stalls, 5*s.*; Private Boxes, £1 11*s.* 6*d.* and £2 2*s.*; Upper Boxes, 4*s.*; Pit, 2*s.*; Gallery, 1*s.*

Grand Entrance to Stalls and Boxes in the Strand; Pit and Gallery Entrances in Catherine Street; Royal Entrance in Exeter Street; Stage Entrance in Wellington Street.

I have one remark to make upon this opening programme. Two-thirds of it were avowedly "from the French," and the only thing original was the burlesque by Mr. W. S. Gilbert. The French contributions were properly acknowledged, and the operetta was paid for, although it was an adaptation of an adaptation. The *Two Harlequins*, a French musical piece, probably called a "Vaudeville," was published as far back as 1718, and, according to the title page, was acted by the French comedians at the "Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre," where French pieces and operas were frequently represented during the season.

Mr. Henry Morley, one of the ablest and most conscientious critics of his time, wound up his "notice" of the Gaiety opening as follows in the *Examiner*:—

"How pleasant it is to watch the face of Miss Farren! If a throng of people are on the stage and she enters, what a smile, what a gleam of the eye! It is like turning up the gas. Some of the genius of her grandfather lives in her; blood goes for something, after all! On the French stage they characterize actresses who possess this invaluable vitality by the expression, *elle a le diable au corps.*

"We conclude by recording our sincere and cordial approbation of the management of the Gaiety Theatre. Mr. Hollingshead has performed an unparalleled feat. In a new theatre, with a new company, where the members were strangers to each other, and under great difficulties, which he ex-

plained to the audience, he performed an operetta, a drama, and a burlesque, without a single hitch, mistake, or delay. The whole machine worked with admirable precision and effect. As a performance the character represented by Mr. Hollingshead, being the most arduous, was perhaps the best bit of acting in the whole entertainment. We are happy to welcome to the managerial chairs a gentleman of so much intellect, taste, and energy."

My literary friends were naturally interested in my venture, wishing me every success, and their letters may be read with the knowledge of this friendly feeling. I quote the following letter from my friend and brother worker on *Household Words*, the late Wilkie Collins, as it stamps the character of the house as the first of the improved theatres, and the character of the management as the first of the *bonâ-fide* "no fee" managements.

"90, GLOUCESTER PLACE,
PORTMAN SQUARE, W.,
4th February, 1869.

DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,—

A line to thank you for last night, and to congratulate you on 'the show.' It is simply—of its size and class—the most complete, elegant, and beautifully decorated theatre I have ever seen anywhere. The approaches to it (lobbies and so on) a model to all theatres, and the people employed to open boxes and take cloaks, so unobtrusively useful and civil, that I and my friends walked into 'Box

CONSTANCE LOSEBY

No. 8,' wondering (with an experience of some other theatres) whether we were awake or dreaming. You have deserved a great public encouragement, and I really believe you may count, in this case, on receiving your deserts.

I will certainly—as soon as my present dramatic occupations give me time—try and think of something for your stage. I fancy I know what you want—a nice little story, bright and lively, to begin at 8 or 8.30, and end at 10. If I find myself dropping salt on the tail of an idea, you shall hear from me again.

Very truly yours,
WILKIE COLLINS."

The abolition of fees—one of the things which impressed Wilkie Collins, a regular playgoer—was not my invention. It was begun at Covent Garden during the Pyne and Harrison management of English Opera, some years before the Gaiety Theatre was built or thought of, and it was imitated by Benjamin Webster afterwards at the "New Adelphi," so called to distinguish it from Frederick Yates's "Old Adelphi." At both theatres the reform was carried out in a half-hearted manner, and at the New Adelphi it broke down from a defect of organization, and a want of sympathy between the manager and his subordinates. Benjamin Webster was an actor (and a very good actor), but the "front of the house" was in the hands of old-fashioned officials.

In abolishing fees at the Gaiety Theatre in a thorough and determined manner, I was not actuated by any high principles of philanthropy. I knew that I might rob a playgoer of a sovereign with impunity, but that I must not worry him for sixpence. That was my belief, and I acted up to it for eighteen years without a misgiving. When toll-gates were abolished the tolls remained, but they were not collected by stopping travellers with restive horses, or pulling them up in the middle of the night while the change had to be counted out by the light of a lantern.

The Gaiety Theatre was opened without the aid of the bill-sticker. "No twenty-four-sheet posters" were displayed on walls and hoardings; no "window bills" were distributed amongst suburban shopkeepers; no "double crowns" were paraded through the streets on the backs and fronts of "sandwich men," and no hand-bills were thrown in the faces of omnibus passengers.

The theatre was opened by a newspaper man in a penny newspaper age, and it advertised its wares freely in all the newspapers. The money saved in printers' bills, bill-stickers' rentals, and bill-inspectors' salaries was spent in the columns of the leading journals. The worry saved was worth thousands.

Every advertisement was as clear as it could be made first, and as taking as it could be made afterwards. It stated the hour of opening and the hour of closing; the pieces to be performed, and the time

when each piece commenced; and the prices of admission. Above all it not only stated the name of the theatre, but the street in which it was situated. It was not assumed that because the Gaiety Theatre happened to be in the Strand that fact was necessarily known to the universe by intuition. Starting, as it did, on the ruins of a bankrupt music-hall, it was necessary to state emphatically that it was not only the Gaiety, but the Gaiety Theatre. It lived down its youth and newness in time, as we all do; but the theatrical baby required more nursing and advertising than any one of the old-established playhouses. The London cabmen were instructed in its name and position, by a judicious bundle of invitations.

The electric light, in the form we know it now, had not been discovered or invented in 1868, but primary batteries were occasionally used for "search-lights." I had one of exceptional power fitted up early in 1869, and with this brilliant rays were thrown from the top of the theatre to St. Mary's Church in the Strand, and from St. Mary's Church to Charing Cross. The effect was worth the cost, from an advertising point of view, but I discontinued it long before its novelty had been exhausted. It occurred to me that if any accident happened—if a horse, frightened by the strange light, ran away, and ended its panic by dashing into a jeweller's front window, I should be legally responsible (and very justly) for all the damage. The primary battery was withdrawn after a short run, and I

waited ten years before I again speculated in electric lighting.

This may not have been dramatic art, but it was certainly showman's business. It must not be forgotten that I was working in the now despised "sixties."

The people who take an interest in the drama as an art or an amusement, either as amateurs or paid critics and reporters, have always had a tendency to select certain periods of theatrical trade, and to put them in the pillory as examples of depressing degradation. The degradation, as a general disease, is, in all cases, more or less imaginary, for the drama is dependent for its very existence on a watchful consideration for the public taste; and its civilization is always just on a level, neither more nor less, with the civilization of the hour. Managers may pretend to manage, and dictate to their customers; Lord Chamberlains and Censors may pretend to watch over and preserve the purity of dramatic productions and the manners and interpolated language of actors; but one of the chief ruling powers in this, and every other country, is the standard of decency of the time, whatever that may be. The standard of taste is another strong ruling power, and woe upon the manager who thinks he has a mission to rise above it! His attempt to raise his mortals to the skies will only teach him one obvious lesson—his place in the world is that of a tradesman, not a reformer.

For some reason the period most despised at the

present day is the "sixties." "Early," "middle," or "late"—it is all the same; a period, like Wordsworth's maiden, having "few to praise and very few to love." This period has been assailed in print, assailed in woodcut, water-colour, and oils, and now the stage has joined in the attack in the person of Mr. A. W. Pinero, our leading dramatist, with his comedy of *Trelawny of the 'Wells.'* Mr. Pinero, like the Devil in Robert Southey's poem, has "come into London by Tottenham Court Road rather by chance than by whim." He has dressed his stage with "drawing-room suites" made and sold when that thoroughfare was a byword and a reproach in the furniture market, and Chippendale, Adams, Hipplewite, and Sheraton had been forgotten as workmen, and not yet been beatified as saints. This was long before the South Kensington æsthetic light had come to dispel the gloom of the dark ante-South Kensington ages. Clerkenwell now is on its trial—the Clerkenwell of the despised "sixties"—in a district that is a squalid hanger-on of Belgravia, and in a theatre which stands on the site of "Bloody Bridge," the footpads' favourite link between London and the village of Chelsea.

The playgoer of the despised "sixties" had very little to complain of, in spite of the period's historical detractors. His stalls had not gone up to ten shillings or ten and sixpence, but were priced at the more modest sum of six or seven shillings; his pits were not half a crown, but two shillings, eighteenpence, and sometimes one shilling; his

"dress-circles" were not six shillings or seven and sixpence, but five shillings; his upper boxes were cheap in proportion, and he had a choice of a good many sixpenny galleries. He had a full theatrical meal for his money. His theatres sometimes opened at six in the evening, and nearly always at half-past six, and he had triple bills, quadruple bills, and sometimes quintuple bills. Even his pantomimes were frequently prefaced by a drama. The Haymarket sometimes had a final farce, which began a little before midnight. It was not a go-to-bed period, and the legislation of the time, as I have said before, was not the slap-you-and-put-you-to-bed legislation. Suppers were a recognised and popular meal, and those who ate them were not choked by attempting to swallow their food in accordance with an impossible and molly-coddling Act of Parliament. "Alamode beef" was still a favourite dish for light midnight feeders, and chops and huge mealy baked potatoes for more robust revellers.

The despised "sixties" was a period of social freedom which put to shame the vaunted nineties. The caked tyranny of broadcloth had been defeated by common sense, and your coat sleeves had no longer a glossy surface in which you could see to shave yourself. Your "bags" may have been of the "pegtop" order, with every apology to Mr. Pinero, but the "sixteen-shilling trousers" had already asserted themselves. The "registered paletôt" had been imitated and surpassed, and the

stove-pipe hat of civilization had been mitigated by the billycock. Life, with all respect to Mr. Mallock, was worth living.

The central theatres were not numerous, and were not comfortable. The sanitary arrangements were faulty, to put it mildly, and the best seats were not luxurious. To compensate for this, the playhouses looked like playhouses, and were not an exhibition of architects' temples. The pieces were neither better nor worse than the pieces of other periods. The stage has always been a receptacle for the bad, the good, and the indifferent. Spectacle has been produced, when the watchful theatrical tradesmen thought "there was money in it"; the "legitimate drama" has been patronized when the same tradesman thought the public would "stand it"—he, of course, being delighted to be free from authors' fees and the whims and fancies of authors at rehearsal. The French stage was drawn upon freely, as it always is, the "sixties" being perhaps a little less honest in acknowledgment than the nineties. Even the "palmy days" of the drama half a century earlier were lightened with abortions like Monk Lewis's *Castle Spectre.*

The despised "sixties" had their actors and actresses of some little importance, even if they were less patronized or spoilt by "social recognition." The well-drilled mediocrity of a later period—the actor and actress without a repertory—the product solely of long and laborious rehearsals, was not a perceptible quantity in the "sixties." More was

thought about the work of the stage, even if the work was somewhat conventional, than the "status" of the worker. Aspirations were humble and modest. The "Tottie" of the "sixties" (and every age and period has had its "Totties") was content with a supper of tripe and table-beer, and a fortnight's holiday at Margate or even Gravesend. Evolution had not done its work. Tottie had not risen to the heights of Monte Carlo, as Monte Carlo then was as little known to the travelling mob as the source of the Nile, or the place which Nansen has made a fortune out of by not discovering, The Café Verrey and the Café Royal were not her favourite "eating houses"; and she could not turn up her pretty little nose at a *soufflé de volaille aux truffes*, if it was a little "touched" by the oven, or think her "extra sec" was "corked," and say so, if she saw a fragment of cork floating in the goblet. She was seldom or never brought in contact with such "society" luxuries. Her wildest dream was a late supper at a boiled-beef house or a Sunday dinner at "Clunn's" or "Evans's."

The "sixties," as a theatrical period, could boast of Helen Faucit (Lady Martin), who linked the Macready stage with the Boucicault stage; Benjamin Webster, an actor with a pronounced mannerism and a bad delivery, but with much of the spirit of Frédéric Lemaître; and John Baldwin Buckstone, the last of the natural, juicy, genuine low comedians. Robson still lingered on the stage, a feeble parody of his former self—a little man with a large head and

dapper legs (like Garrick's in the pictures), with more real dramatic instinct and hell-fire in his small body than the whole theatrical world of his time could lay claim to. Leigh Murray, another deplored and deplorable wreck, the English Delaunay, had just disappeared, to be dragged into temporary publicity by a charitable benefit. Samuel Phelps, after his noble and unsubsidized career at Sadler's Wells, which followed his Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and Macready days, had come down once more to the centre, to be received like a beloved Rip Van Winkle. His mission was to brush the dust off the bust of Shakespeare outside the floorcloth factory façade of the National Theatre, and to revive that lurid, Ibsenitish and occasionally pantomimic literary nightmare, *Manfred*. Walter Lacy was in his prime, with his old-time histrionic swagger, joined to a power of catching the spirit of the hour; Charles Fechter—English, as far as being born in Hanway Yard, but French in training, sentiment, and education—was the acknowledged king of romantic drama, a liberal and energetic manager, backed by Charles Dickens, and not by Lady Burdett-Coutts, as generally rumoured; Miss Kate Terry, a brilliant and sympathetic actress, had not then become Mrs. Arthur Lewis, and retired from the stage; her sister Ellen, scarcely conscious of her charm and genius, was a young beginner, appearing in the limited ring of central London theatres. Mrs. Stephens ("Granny") was the most popular comic and homely "old woman" of the stage, and Mrs. Stirling (Lady Gregory),

then in her prime, was the leading *grande dame*—capable of doing anything entrusted to her by the few London managers; George Belmore (whose amusement was market gardening) was the chief inheritor of the Robsonian "intensity," and was destined, a short time before his death, to be the comedian to whom the late Colonel Bateman pinned his faith when he opened the Lyceum Theatre. Henry Irving, a young man from Edinburgh—a walking gentleman, utility and even burlesque actor—had made one or two appearances in London—in *Ivy Hall* at the Princess's, where he played a minor part, and where the piece was a failure; and in *Hunted Down* at the St. James's, where he made a success as Rawdon Crawley, indicative of future greatness. He had settled down as stage manager at the New Queen's Theatre, in Long Acre, owned by Mr. Henry Labouchere, M.P., where he had the pleasure of acting with his friend, Mr. J. L. Toole, surrounded by Mr. Charles Wyndham, Miss Henrietta Hodson, Mr. Lionel Brough, Mr. John Ryder, Miss Ellen Farren (then a young beginner), Miss Ellen Terry, Miss Adelaide Neilson, Mrs. Rousby (a short-lived stage beauty and celebrity), and many others. Mr. J. L. Toole had graduated at the Lyceum under Mr. Charles Dillon, and went to the New Adelphi to act with Paul Bedford and take up the low comedian's mantle of the late Edward Wright, on his road to the Queen's and the Gaiety Theatres. Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan were shining stars of the "sixties," as they had been of the fifties; she a

clever actress of comedy on the stage, and a clever woman everywhere, and he (always personally conducted by his wife) a finished character actor, especially in old Frenchmen. His Achille Dufour will live in the pages—always more or less unsatisfactory pages—of theatrical history, by the side of Samuel Phelps's Sir Pertinax Macsycophant. Frank Burnand had just come to the front at the little Royalty as a burlesque writer, and in *Black-Eyed Susan* had provided London with a phenomenal "run," beating that of Pierce Egan's *Life in London.*

Two low comedians in petticoats, Mrs. John Wood and Mrs. Frank Matthews (the former, happily, still alive and popular), brightened the despised period; Mr. and Mrs. Dion Boucicault gave the stage the best stage Irishman since Power, and the most graceful and pleasing little pocket Venus of an actress in stage annals. Dion Boucicault and Tom Taylor were the cleverest adaptors that ever furnished the theatre with working material, and the latter only failed when he attempted original composition. Tom Taylor's *Ticket-of-Leave Man*, produced in a fortnight (for which he only got £150), will live as long as *Caste*, the champion work of Tom Robertson and the "sixties." Miss Marie Wilton (Lady Bancroft), who had been brought up on a diet of Strand burlesque, furnished by such experienced and clever cooks as Robert Brough, Frank Talfourd, William Brough, and Henry J. Byron, was (and is) a woman of genius, both as an actress and a manager, and her successful cultiva-

tion of Robertson at the little theatre in the Totten ham Court Road is something to set against the "Adelphi Guests," and other managerial horrors belonging to, but not unfortunately confined to, the "sixties." This despised period gave us Mr. Henry Neville, Mr. H. J. Montague, and Mrs. Kendal as actors and actress, and Mr. W. S. Gilbert as dramatist—original from the top of his head to the sole of his foot, though it is difficult to say at which end of his body we should place the head or the feet. It gave us that curious composite actor, or droll, Mr. E. A. Sothern, who, dressed and acting like a gentleman, combined in a part called Lord Dundreary the jokes of the low comedian, the quips of the circus clown, and the funniments of the "corner-man" at a Christy-minstrel entertainment. It gave us the latter part of Charles Kean's distinguished career, and proper, if sometimes too elaborate, stage productions; it gave us Jefferson (an importation) in *Rip Van Winkle*, the triumph of natural acting; it gave us Charles Coghlan, the earliest representative of "reserved force"; and it gave us artistically designed dresses, even for the lowest forms of the drama. Among its horrors it cultivated to excess the old beggarly benefit system—a bad legacy from the bad old "palmy days" of the drama. No actor or actress was too distinguished to be ashamed of "sending round the hat." Whatever may have been the fault of the despised "sixties," they had one great and monumental merit. They gave us in his full maturity the most apparently spontaneous

MRS. JOHN WOOD

actor who ever blessed and honoured the stage—the one actor whose art was never apparent, and who thoroughly understood and played up to the Horatian maxim. They gave us the finest champagne ever put upon the festive boards—they gave us Charles Mathews.

As I have before mentioned, the design of the Gaiety Theatre was of the Siamese-twin order in plan, if of the Renaissance order in architecture. When completed, we were to have a building containing a theatre communicating with a restaurant, and a restaurant communicating with a theatre. The capitalist, the architect, and myself (the tenant) had arranged this scheme, but we were doomed to receive an unexpected check when we went before the Strand Division of Magistrates, sitting in Brewster Sessions, for the necessary licence. The application, the arguments used in opposition by the representative of the local publicans and the "Trade" generally, and the views and conduct of the authorities, form such an instructive page in licensing history, that they are worthy of a detailed record.

"THE GAIETY THEATRE AND RESTAURANT.

"In this case John Hollingshead, of No. 5, Bloomsbury Square, author, the holder of a refreshment and wine licence of the Gaiety Theatre in the Strand, applied for a licence to the same.

"Mr. Child opposed this application, and said that Mr. Hollingshead was not satisfied with the privi-

leges which were granted to him under the Lord Chamberlain's licence, but now wanted to open an enormous public-house outside the theatre. He said again, as he had said in a previous case, that there was plenty of public-house accommodation in the Strand, and there was no necessity whatever to add to the number at present existing there. He was told that a very fabulous sum had been offered for these premises which were now asked to be licensed—indeed, he was told it was something like £3,500 a year; but he apprehended the Bench would not altogether ignore the interests of those persons who carried on business in the neighbourhood.

"The Chairman said he thought it should be clearly made known what was the precise nature of the application. Was the licence asked for intended to apply to that part of the property extending from the entrance to the theatre in the Strand to the corner of Catherine Street?

"Mr. Poland (who appeared in support of the application)—Yes.

"The Chairman—And is there to be communication from that house into the theatre?

"Mr. Poland—Yes; there will be communication from the restaurant to the theatre, and from the theatre to the restaurant.

"Mr. Child said this was an application for a licence to a large public-house and nothing more, and he asked again, was there not already sufficient public-house accommodation in the Strand? The Lord

Chamberlain's licence gave Mr. Hollingshead all the accommodation he required so far as the supply of refreshments in the theatre was concerned, and he reminded the Bench that this was not the case in the time of the Strand Music Hall, which formerly occupied part of the site. Under all the circumstances he hoped the present application would not be acceded to.

"Mr. Poland expressed his great surprise that it should be stated that it was Mr. Hollingshead's intention in asking for this licence to become a gigantic gin-shop keeper, for nothing of the kind was ever contemplated. The premises which had been erected had been designed for the purpose of carrying on the business of a first-class restaurant, and Mr. Child dragged in the poor Strand Music Hall, which had nothing on earth to do with the present application. The Strand Music Hall has been pulled down, and there was an end of it. The present application came before the Bench entirely on its own merits, and he should ask them to decide the case accordingly. Now, what were the facts? They were aware that one of the most elegant theatres in London had been erected, on which no less than £60,000 had been expended, and a portion of the ground which had been appropriated had been made available for the purpose of the theatre, and it was now proposed to open a first-class restaurant on part of the site, because it was felt that there was room in the locality. And he would impress upon the magistrates, as the question of the

Lord Chamberlain's licence had been raised, that although it was quite true that that licence carried with it ample powers for the sale of wine, spirits, and beer, yet that did not at all affect the application now under consideration. The persons holding the Lord Chamberlain's licence undoubtedly had a right to sell excisable liquors within the theatres, but it was not until they got at the top of the staircase that the theatre proper began; and his lordship's licence did not extend to premises adjoining the theatre, which was the case in the present instance. The two things were separate and distinct. The Lord Chamberlain's licence extended to the theatre proper, and the magistrates were that day asked to grant a licence to the restaurant. Mr. Hollingshead had inquired what he ought to do before making this application, and he was told that his proper course was to go to the magistrates for a licence, and there he was accordingly. It was said that there was plenty of public-house accommodation in the Strand, and he (Mr. Poland) quite admitted that to be so; but the present was not an application for a licence by a person intending to open another public-house. What was asked for was that a licence might be given to a first-class restaurant, for which it was thought there was room, and in which a good business might be done.

"A show of hands was taken of the magistrates, and the application was refused, only one hand being held up in favour of the granting of the licence."

Of course neither Mr. Lionel Lawson nor myself felt inclined to submit to this magisterial snub, and a quiet but effective agitation, backed by considerable legislative and journalistic influence, was commenced against the decision, with the result that on an appeal to the Quarter Sessions at Clerkenwell, it was reversed without discussion, or any alteration being made in the property or the application. Though having no pecuniary interest in the restaurant, or even in the bars attached to the theatre, I became by two Acts of Parliament a doubly authorised licensed victualler—licensed by the excise, through the authority of the Lord Chamberlain, to allow drink to be sold in the theatre for the convenience of the public, and the profit of the contractor, and licensed by the magistrates to sell drink and refreshments in the restaurant, also for the profit of the contractor or contractors. I was always amiable, and was sometimes called "practical."

The opening programme began to show slight indications of weakness in the early part of 1869, as long "runs" were the exception rather than the rule in the "sixties." The burlesque maintained its ground, or appeared to do so; but the middle piece was not strong, and it was changed by a drama from the pen of Tom Robertson, then one of the most popular playwrights of the day. This was the following production :—

GAIETY CHRONICLES

At a Quarter to Eight,
A New and Original Drama, in Five Acts, entitled

DREAMS

Written by T. W. ROBERTSON,
Author of *School*, *Home*, *Society*, *Caste*, *Play*, *Ours*, *David Garrick*, etc., and produced under his immediate direction.

Rittmeister Harfthal } Rudolph Harfthal }	... ... (his Son)	Mr. ALFRED WIGAN Mr. ALFRED WIGAN
The Duke of Loamshire ...	...	... Mr. MACLEAN
Earl of Mount-Forrestcourt	...	Mr. JOHN CLAYTON
Mr. John Hibbs	...	... Mr. R. SOUTAR
Old Gray	...	... Mr. JOSEPH ELDRED
Lady Clara Vere De Vere		Miss MADGE ROBERTSON
Lina	...	... Miss RACHEL SANGER
Frau Harfthal	...	... ... Mrs. HENRY LEIGH

Act I.

MAYENCE ... ... T. GRIEVE & SON

A lapse of Eight Months.

Act II.

CASTLE OAKWOOD, near Windsor ... J. O'CONNOR

A lapse of Ten Weeks.

Act III.

THE LODGINGS ... ... T. GRIEVE & SON

Act IV.

THE MARQUEE ... ... T. GRIEVE & SON

A lapse of Two Years.

Act V.

LOVE LANE ... ... T. GRIEVE & SON

Time ... ... The Present.

JOHN CLAYTON

EARLY DAYS

Herr MEYER LUTZ has Composed the following Original Music for this Drama:
Overture, "Dreams." Waltz, "Dreams." March, "The Challenge." Quadrille, "Lady Clara." Polonaise.

Stage Manager: Mr. ROBERT SOUTAR.
Assistant Acting Manager: Mr. JOSEPH ELDRED.
Musical Director: Herr MEYER LUTZ.

This play was carefully cast, with one exception. Mr. Alfred Wigan was allowed to play two characters (always a more or less risky thing on the stage), and for one character—"Rudolph Harfthal"—he was utterly unsuited. Romance and love-making were outside his powers, as they always were; his *forte* was dignified pathos (and even that was a little hard and insincere), and strong character acting. In a tricky part like "John Mildmay," in *Still Waters Run Deep*, he always created an effect by great deliberation, and the courage to keep a houseful of playgoers waiting while he turned his back to them for several minutes, to drive in a nail and hang up a picture. It was quite a stage trick. As the old "Rittmeister" in *Dreams* he was excellent; as the son of that "Rittmeister" he was a comparative failure.

The piece was put upon the stage with every attention to detail, and one scene, copied from "Nash's Interiors," both the artist (Mr. John O'Connor) and myself took infinite pains with. A landscape by Grieve, called "Love Lane," might have been a Royal Academy picture.

The drama was preceded by the usual operetta, and followed by the burlesque of *Robert the Devil.* The playgoer had enough—perhaps too much?—for his money. *Dreams* was not a success, although John Clayton did it good service—making his first appearance at the theatre. It was revived with better results in the autumn with a different cast, Mr. Henry Neville playing the son, and Mr. Sam Emery playing the father. I made a few alterations in the piece, for which the author thanked me, and said I had helped to sell it for him in the country. He was a most amiable and pleasant author to have dealings with, and his stage management was as gentle as it was effective. He knew his business thoroughly.

The non-success (I can hardly call it failure) of "*Dreams*" weakened *Robert the Devil,* or the *prestige* of the bill, and I decided, perhaps rather hastily, to produce a new spectacular burlesque on the subject of *Columbus.*

At 9,

COLUMBUS!

or, The Original Pitch in a Merry Key.

A New Opera Bouffe. Music by the best Composers available.
By ALFRED THOMPSON.

THE EGGSPOSITION!
THE EGGSPEDITION!!
THE EGGSCURSION!!!
THE EGGSPLANATION!!!!
THE EGGSALTATION!!!!!

EARLY DAYS

Period, 1490 A.D. Scene First in Spain, afterwards in the Newfoundland of Kokatouka.

The Ballets and Processions arranged by Mr. JOHN CORMACK.

The whole produced under the personal superintendence of the Author.

The Costumes by Mr. HASBURY. The Armour and Jewels manufactured in Paris, from designs by ALFRED THOMPSON, Esq.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Christopher Columbus ... ... Miss E. FARREN
(Our theme with variations.)

Don Diego ... ... Miss CONSTANCE LOSEBY
(A running accompaniment—Columbus's favourite pupil.)

Alonzo Pinzon ... ... MR. JOSEPH ELDRED
(Boatswain to Columbus—Thorough base.)

Tobago ... ... Mr. MACLEAN
(A Natural—Assistant to Columbus.)

King Ferdinand, of Castile and Arrogan Mr. TEESDALE
(A dominant in the scale of nations.)

Lord High Admiral of Spain ... Mr. JOSEPH ROBINS
(One who has never been on any C below the Line.)

Admiral of the Red, Admiral of the White, Admiral of the Blue — Full of crotchets and quavers. — Mr. DOORLEY, Mr. HARVEY, Mr. GROSVENOR

First Man at Arms ... ... Mr. W. M. TERROTT
(A sentry of the XVth ditto.)

Second Man at Arms ... ... Mr. SORCE
(A ditto of the XVth cent'ry.)

Man at the Wheel ... ... Mr. JOSEPH ROBINS
(An Anachronism, the original Spanish *Man tiller*.)

Don Londrez, Don Trabucos, Don Cabana, Don Quicato — Pupils of Columbus. — Miss CONWAY, Miss HENRIE, Miss VILLIERS, Miss BROUGHAM

One of the People ... ... } Miss WILLIAMS
Boy in the tops ... ... }

Koffyb-Igin	Savage suitors for Paraquita's Hand.	Mr. MITCHENSON
Choc-no-sof		Mr. J. MARSHALL
Kaska dinos		Mr. H. MARSHALL
Oli-poka		Mr. BOLOGNA

Paraquita, Queen of the Kokatoucans — Miss E. FOWLER
Sennatina, her Nurse ... ... — Miss TREMAINE
Ladies of the Spanish Court — Miss GRUNDY, Miss JOLLY, Miss GOULDSMITH, Miss BUTLER

Courtiers, Pages, Men at Arms, Sailors, Kokatoucans, Savages, Amazons, Priestesses, Servants, &c., &c., &c.

Scene 1st.

THE POLYTECHNIC OF THE PAST — MR. GORDON

(With the Vision of the Future.)

Scene 2nd.

THE PIERHEAD OF THE PERIOD — Mr. GORDON

(Columbus's Departure.)

Scene 3rd.

ON BOARD COLUMBUS'S CARAVEL

Messrs. TELBIN & SON

(Changing to the Coast of Kokatouka.)

Scene 4th.

PARAQUITA'S BOUDOIR ... ... Mr. GORDON

Scene 5th.

THE PALACÈ—SOMETHING LIKE AN ECLIPSE

MAT MORGAN

GRAND BALLET.

Pas d'Abanicos. Entrée de Mlle. ROSÉRI. Pas seul, Mlle. ROSÉRI. Octava Dansaute. Quartetto del Trompo.

GRAND FINALE.

Première Danseuse: Mlle. MARGITTA ROSÉRI

(From the Grand Opera, Madrid).

Assisted by a full *Corps de Ballet* from the Opera-Houses.

The Musical arrangements under the Direction of Herr MEYER LUTZ.

SAMUEL EMERY

Fantasia	"Columbus" ...	*Meyer Lutz*
Chorus	"Les Pompiers de Nanterre"	*Louis*
Song and Chorus	"La Chanson de Fortunio" ...	*Offenbach*
March	"Norma"	*Bellini*
Song	"L'Ile de Tulipatan"	*Offenbach*
Song and Chorus	"Le Canard a trois becs" ...	*E. Jonas*
Chorus	"Faust"	*Gounod*
Berceuse	... ...	*Gounod*
Chorus	"Devil's in it"	*Balfe*
Duett	"Les deux Aveugles"	*Offenbach*
Solo & Ensemble	"Mesdames de la Halle" ...	*Offenbach*
Chorus ...	"Le Canard a trois becs" ...	*E. Jonas*
Scena & Caballetta	"Traviata"	*Verdi*
Trio & Chorus	"Geneviève de Brabant" ...	*Offenbach*
Chorus ...	"Geneviève de Brabant" ...	*Offenbach*
Song & Ensemble	"Orphée aux Enfers" ...	*Offenbach*
	"Le Joueur de Flûte" ...	*Hervé*
Chorus	"Les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde"	*Hervé*
Chorus ...	"Nicaraguense Melody"	
Quartett	"Rings" ...	*Meyer Lutz*
Duett	"French Melody"	
Duett & Ensemble	"Les petits Crevés"	*Boullard*
Solo and Chorus ...	... ...	*Meyer Lutz*
Duett	"La Diva"	*Offenbach*
Chorus	"La Diva"	
Ensemble ...	"L'Ecossais de Chatou" ...	*Leo Delibes*

Columbus was not only the most artistic spectacle put upon the Gaiety stage, but as a burlesque production it marked a distinct theatrical advance. For this reason I have printed the full programme.

The theatre, by this time, was getting known, more perhaps in London than in the country, and the changes of programme suggested the following advertisement or "manifesto":—

"As the programme at this house is frequently

varied to suit purely metropolitan audiences, seats can never be booked more than a fortnight in advance. Many dramas and burlesques withdrawn for a time, however, are reproduced as opportunity serves. The free list for any *bonâ-fide* members of the literary, artistic, and scientific profession is never suspended. The abolition of fees for everything is strictly enforced in every part of the theatre, and the performances, though they include an operetta, a long drama, and spectacular burlesque, always conclude at or before a quarter-past eleven. The theatre is kept open every night, all the year round, and the prices are arranged to suit all classes."

Mr. W. S. Gilbert, the author of my opening burlesque, maintained his friendly relations with the theatre. He was somewhat of a martinet in his stage management, but he generally knew what he wanted, was more often right than wrong, and was consequently an able director of his own pieces. He was always ready to accept a suggestion if he thought it was good and reasonable. He had written a comedy to which he gave the name of *An Old Score*. It was printed—a great advantage to a busy manager. I read it, and was so struck with its clever dialogue, that I put it in rehearsal at once, to back up the spectacular burlesque, which was not remarkable for literary merit. Alfred Thompson, eminent as an artist, was a little fond of posing as an admirable Crichton. *An Old Score* might have been written for my Gaiety Com-

ADELAIDE NEILSON

pany, as it then existed, and it was produced with the following cast: Mr. Henry Neville, Miss Henrade, Mr. Sam Emery, Miss Rosina Ranoe (Mrs. Frank Burnand), Mr. John Clayton, Mr. J. Eldred, Mr. Maclean, Mr. J. Robins, and Mrs. Leigh. *Dreams* had been played as a first piece before *Columbus*, the performances ending with a farce (still a solid triple bill). *An Old Score* was presented second, being preceded by an operetta, and followed by *Columbus*.

An Old Score (produced late in July—a bad period of the year) was deficient in characters with whom a general audience could sympathise. The relations of father and son were very unpleasant. The father was a scoundrel, and the son never hesitated to tell him so. It had all the worst superficial faults of Thackeray, without his deep and gentle humanity. The author revived it once, some years after, at the "Court Theatre," but it never became popular. It suffered from too much cleverness, and this is a crime in the eyes of the ordinary playgoer. It was Mr. Gilbert's first comedy, and has an interest as a matter of theatrical history.

The autumn season of 1869 still clung to the triple bill, with strong drama as one of the chief attractions.

The company was strengthened by the engagement of Miss Adelaide Neilson, a lady of great personal attractions, and with real dramatic instinct. Her career, if truthfully recorded, would furnish one

of the most remarkable stories of stage life—a life full of romances. In writing this commonplace record of a theatre which has a "unique history" (as the *Daily Telegraph* recently admitted) for the few years of its existence, I have bound myself by the same hard-and-fast rule which I observed in MY LIFETIME. The private lives of my actors and actresses I respect as sealed books, even at the risk of making this volume "as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage." When the late J. R. Planché published his *Reminiscences* he gave me a copy, and I thanked him and congratulated him. Mr. Planché was a gentleman. "My dear boy," he said, "what I had to keep out would have made the volume!"

The autumn drama produced was an adaptation from the French of M. Belot, preceded, as usual, by an operetta, and followed by a burlesque :—

At 7.30, a New Drama, entitled

A LIFE CHASE.

By Mr. JOHN OXENFORD and Mr. HORACE WIGAN.

(Adapted from the French Drama, by M. BELOT: *Le Drame de la Rue de la Paix*, First Produced at the Second "Théâtre Français," in 1868.)

The Scenery by Mr. GEORGE GORDON and Assistants.

Bertrand Alvimar	Mr. ALFRED WIGAN
Vaubert	Mr. JOHN CLAYTON
Mr. Peregrine Thrill	Mr. JOSEPH ROBINS
Marquis de Fontelle	Miss E. FARREN
M. Grenier	Mr. JOHN MACLEAN
Registrar	Mr. H. R. TEESDALE
Martingale	Mr. HARVEY

Beaune	Mr. J. B. RAE
Culvet	Mr. EVERET
Clerk	Mr. WARREN
Pierre	Mr. NORTON
Baptiste	Mr. COOPER
Messenger	Mr. SORCE
Gendarme	Mr. WALKINSON
Bianca	Miss ROSE COGHLAN
Madame St. Ange	Mrs. HENRY LEIGH
Madame Godeau	Miss HENRIE
Madame Carillon	Miss CONWAY
Madame Bouval	Miss NEILSON

Servants, Guests, Gendarmes, Messengers, etc.

Time ... Present. Situation ... Paris.

Act I.

PRIVATE OFFICE, PALAIS DE JUSTICE.

Act II.

SALON IN THE HOUSE OF MADAME ST. ANGE.

Act III.

MADAME BOUVAL'S APARTMENT.

Act IV.

CAFE ANGLAIS.

Act V.

APARTMENT ON THE QUAYS,

With View of Seine and Towers of Notre Dame. Moonlight.

There the same mistake was made in the cast as in Robertson's drama of *Dreams*. Mr. Alfred Wigan was the leading man, and had the pick of the basket. He chose "Bertrand Alvimar," a young romantic part, when he ought to have played "Vau-

bert," the detective. Mr. John Clayton represented this latter character very effectively, but he would have been much better placed in Mr. Alfred Wigan's position, and the drama would have had a better chance of success. Theatres, however, are ruled like a Hindoo household. Caste is the master.

The other twin of the complete Gaiety Plan was now ready, and it was opened with the following advertisement :—

THE NEW GAIETY RESTAURANT,

Adjoining the Theatre, will be opened early in October (1869). C. J. PHIPPS, Esq., F.S.A., Architect. Mr. GORDON, Decorator.

Furniture by Messrs. JACKSON & GRAHAM; Plate by Messrs. ELKINGTON & Co.; Glass by Messrs. OSLER; China by Messrs. COPELANDS.

BILLIARD TABLES by Messrs. BURROUGHES & WATTS.

Spacious Dining Saloons. Elegant Private Dining Rooms. English, French, and German Cuisine. Choice Wines of the finest Vintages.

Every convenience for gentlemen and families wishing to Dine before going to the Theatre or Opera. Large and well-ventilated Billiard Rooms, with English and French Tables, and every Club requisite.

Manager ... Mr. HORNYIK (from Vienna).

Eating and drinking, as well as operetta, ballet, drama, and extravaganza being provided, I and some friends thought that literature in the shape of humble journalism should be represented. It was represented accordingly, after a fashion.

HENRY J. BYRON

On Friday, October 15th, 1869, will be published

THE GAIETY GAZETTE,

An Illustrated Journal of Literature, Art, Satire and Society.

The GAIETY GAZETTE will be copiously illustrated with characteristic vignettes and sketches, and from time to time with panoramic surveys of the most prominent gaieties of the hour. The artistic staff will consist of Mr. A. FAIRFIELD, Mr. G. A. SALA, Mr. ALFRED THOMPSON, and others. Among the gentlemen engaged on the literary department of the paper are Mr. DION BOUCICAULT, Mr. FREDK. BOYLE, Mr. SAVILLE CLARKE, Mr. DUTTON COOK, Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, Mr. JOHN OXENFORD, Mr. TOM ROBERTSON, Mr. G. A. SALA, Mr. MOY THOMAS, Mr. ALFRED WIGAN, Mr. EDMUND YATES, and many more.

To be had of all Booksellers. Price Twopence.

The mere appearance of this *Gazette*, which was an obvious Trade Journal, irritated a few of the old-established journalists, who no doubt thought it was a piece of impertinent "progress" for a theatre to have its own "organ." They had probably forgotten the fact that Garrick the manager wrote his own "notices" of Garrick the actor, and that one or two other theatres had the use of special "organs" on the hire-system.

The company of the Gaiety Theatre up to nearly the close of 1869 was not provided with a recognised low comedian of position and popularity. It had Mr. Richard Barker (since distinguished as a stage-manager and professional producer of plays, both in America and England), Mr. Joseph Robins (who earned a reputation in the Albert Smith and Edmund Yates amateur pantomime of *Guy Fawkes*, as an

"amateur clown," in the fifties, and afterwards "took to the stage" in the sixties), and Mr. Joseph Eldred, a clever character actor, but it had no actor received and accepted as a genuine low comedian. This want was supplied on December 13th, 1869, by Mr. J. L. Toole, who appeared in a drama by Mr. Henry J. Byron, which he brought with him, called *Uncle Dick's Darling.*

The drama was preceded by an operetta, and followed by a slight burlesque, *Linda of Chamouni,* running at the time—a great favorite of the Prince of Wales, though not very popular with the public. It had, at least, one "command" night. The burlesque was changed on December 20th, by the production of Sala's *Wat Tyler.*

This was the Christmas bill for 1869—a Gargantuan feast, with a Gargantuan company :—

Commence at Seven o'clock with Offenbach's Operetta of

THE ROSE OF AUVERGNE!

Miss TREMAINE, Mr. C. LYALL, Mr. PERRINI.

At 7.45, a New Drama, by Mr. H. J. BYRON,

UNCLE DICK'S DARLING.

Dick Dolland	(a Cheap Jack)	Mr. J. L. TOOLE
Mr. Chevenix		Mr. HENRY IRVING
Hon. Claude Lorrimor		Mr. H. R. TEESDALE
Joe Leonard	(a Blacksmith)	Mr. J. CLAYTON
Mrs. Torrington		Miss MARIA ELSWORTHY
Alice Renshaw		Miss LITTON
Kate Landrail		Miss L. HENRIE
A Servant...		Miss A. HERBERT
Mary Belton		Miss NEILSON

EARLY DAYS

At 9.30, a New Operatic Extravaganza,

WAT TYLER, M.P.

By Mr. GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

Richard II., King of England	Miss R. COGHLAN
Queen	... Miss LITTON
Henry Plantagenet, *alias* Reginald Beaumanners	Miss E. FARREN
Sir William Walworth	Mr. J. MACLEAN
Walworth Road ... ...(his Son) ...	Miss L. HENRIE
Duke Humphrey	Mr. N. MARLOWE
Lord Epsom of Saltsbury	Miss R. WILSON
Garter King at Arms	Miss A. HERBERT
Wat Tyler	Mr. J. L. TOOLE
Mrs. Tyler	... Mrs. HENRY LEIGH
Ellen Tyler	Miss CONSTANCE LOSEBY
Jack Straw	Mr. PERRINI
Lucy Straw	Miss TREMAINE

Scene 1.—*A TOWN IN ESSEX.*

Scene 2.—*TYLER'S 'UMBLE 'OME.*

Scene 3.—

KING RICHARD'S COURT AT BAYNARD'S CASTLE.

BALLET OF FOOLS.

Scene 4.—*THE LITTLE EASE IN THE TOWER.*

Scene 5.—

OLD HOLBORN BRIDGE AND SNOW HILL.

MAYPOLE DANCE.

During the run of *Uncle Dick's Darling*, I experienced one of the difficulties of management, multiplied by two. Miss Neilson was struck on the head one night by a piece of scenery, and could not

appear on the following night. Her "understudy" was a very competent one, Miss Marie Litton. Miss Neilson gave us very short notice. We sent up to Miss Litton (Mrs. Wybrow Robertson), and found that she had been confined in the morning. Under the circumstances a double apology had to be made to the audience, and the part was *read* by Miss Tremaine.

Uncle Dick's Darling was a clever play, made up of familiar materials, not cursed with any daring originality. It ran no risk of failure for that reason. It was made by a good stage carpenter with well-seasoned wood. I helped the author in his carpentry, with a scene fashioned on the mechanism of a pantomimic "transformation scene," the originality (what little it had) consisting of its application to serious drama. The *Daily News* made the following remarks about this scene, and many other journals printed similar observations :—

"The final change from the blacksmith's shop—a very elaborate and picturesque scene—to the old village green, and the dreaming hawker still asleep on the cart-shafts, is perhaps one of the most marvellous performances of stage mechanism yet achieved. Time was, when inexperienced authors were warned against expecting one heavy set scene to follow another; and even now the most experienced are not able to escape the clumsy contrivances known as 'carpenters' scenes'— that is, scenes painted on a mere curtain, brought near to the footlights, for the purpose of giving time for build-

ing more elaborate scenery behind. But if changes such as those effected in the last act of *Uncle Dick* are possible, it is certainly difficult to understand why these rude devices should be permitted to flourish."

The cast of the piece, of course, looks more important in 1898 than it did in 1869. Mr. Henry Irving had still his commanding position to make. He was playing a flashy part at Drury Lane Theatre, in Dion Boucicault's drama of *Formosa*—a play which encouraged the celebrated pronouncement that "Shakespeare spelt ruin and Byron bankruptcy." It was getting near pantomime time, and *Formosa* was within a fortnight of its withdrawal. Irving was anxious to play in *Uncle Dick's Darling*, and to be amongst friends. I had known him for ten years, and had known Toole much longer. I had written a farce for Toole (*The Birthplace of Podgers*), which he produced in 1858 at the Lyceum, and afterwards revived at the New Adelphi. I had some slight influence with Mr. F. B. Chatterton, the manager of Drury Lane Theatre, and after a little negotiation I got Irving released from his *Formosa* engagement. The part he played in *Uncle Dick* ("Mr. Chevenix") might have been moulded upon Mr. Dombey, and in his representation he foreshadowed another part ("Digby Grant"), in which he afterwards made a great success at another and adjoining theatre—the Vaudeville. He made himself up into a slight resemblance of Mr. Benjamin Disraeli, and

Mr. John Clayton, who played the "Blacksmith," was facetiously described in one of the comic papers as the "Prince of Wales in corduroys." Toole's character of "Uncle Dick" was obviously founded upon Charles Dickens's "Cheap Jack," "Dr. Marigold." The only time Charles Dickens visited the theatre (in 1870, the year in which he died), he was naturally struck, in seeing *Uncle Dick*, with the use the dramatist had made of his creations.

The Gaiety company, at this time, was remarkable for one thing—the number of future managers who were working out a kind of apprenticeship. Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. John Clayton, Miss E. Litton, Miss E. Fowler, were all destined to have theatres of their own in various parts of London, for comedy, drama, and Shakespearian productions. It was many years afterwards that Miss Farren became a manageress, and her venture, made at the wrong theatre, the Opera Comique, when she was suffering from ill-health and a painful disease, was not fortunate.

The burlesque of *Wat Tyler*, which introduced Mr. G. A. Sala to the London stage, was suggested by me to the author on a journey from Frankfort-on-the-Maine to Paris in 1869. It was more of a literary than a dramatic success, and the responsibility rests upon me, as I selected a difficult subject for extravaganza. I placed it on the stage with as much care as Mr. Charles Kean devoted to his historical revivals. The *Times* (Dec. 22, 1869) bore testimony to this fact in the following words :—

MR. HENRY IRVING (SIR HENRY IRVING)

"As far as the work of stage decoration is concerned, Mr. G. A. Sala's new burlesque, *Wat Tyler, M.P.*, may be pronounced one of the most costly and elaborate spectacles ever seen at any theatre. A period, marked by costume and architecture different as possible from anything of the present day, has been selected for illustration, and the work of illustrating has been performed to perfection. One admirably executed picture follows another, and the quaint dance of the Court is excelled by the merrier revel of the Maypole. To the painter, the ballet-master, the costumier, unmitigated praise is due."

The 21st of December being the first anniversary of the opening of the theatre, the following address, or "manifesto," was issued:—

"To-day we complete the anniversary of the opening of the Gaiety Theatre. With the exception of Christmas Day, Ash-Wednesday, and Good Friday, this house—a rare thing in London—has been open every night for a whole year with one unbroken form of entertainment. That entertainment, consisting of operetta, drama, and operatic extravaganza, has been copied by several Metropolitan theatres.

"It is a fact, which may be taken for what it is worth, that the Gaiety has given constant employment to nearly 300 members of the dramatic profession. Though the management never pledged itself to patronise the so-called *British Drama*, the British Drama has fared very well at the Gaiety.

Out of five plays produced, three have been of English growth, viz., *Dreams*, by T. W. Robertson; *An Old Score*, by W. S. Gilbert; and *Uncle Dick's Darling*, by H. J. Byron; the other two were avowed adaptations. The extravaganzas, as usual, have been English, and the author of two of them, Mr. Alfred Thompson, is a gentleman who made his first appearance as a dramatic author at the Gaiety. To-night, another gentleman, Mr. George Augustus Sala, will appeal to you for the first time in a similar capacity.

"Those who have watched the pieces at this theatre will admit that much has been done by the management to raise the artistic standard of stage costume. The comfort of the public has been carefully studied in the front of the house, and the result has been an amount of patronage very satisfactory in the past, and very encouraging for the future.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

"MONDAY, *December 20th*, 1869."

The programme of the Gaiety Theatre showed a good deal of activity—perhaps diseased activity? —the result of a determination not to force pieces down the throat of the public. If a piece, or a combination of pieces, showed signs of waning popularity through the infallible records of the box-office and treasury, no frantic efforts of advertising were made to deceive the patrons of the theatre, no "free list" was "suspended," no "sandwich-men"

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA

were sent out to impede the traffic, no "house full" boards were exhibited outside the theatre (a delightful and elastic managerial placard which may apply to fog as well as to audiences)—the bill was quietly changed; simply that, and nothing more. "Last Nights" were rarely announced; transparent excuses were never made for the "dear departed"; the showman's drum was beaten, the new-comer was speedily and effectively announced — always and only in the public journals. I never questioned the taste of my patrons.

The Sala burlesque being heavy to work, and indicating weak drawing power, was taken off. Mr. Alfred Wigan, being due to return, took his place again in the bill, appearing in the *First Night* in the character of the old Frenchman, father of an operatic *débutante*, a performance in which he was quite unrivalled. *Uncle Dick's Darling* formed the last piece. An operetta opened the evening—a *pasticcio*, called the *Happy Village*, and burlesque, as a concluding entertainment, was treated to a short holiday.

The Gaiety burlesques almost attained the dignity of being opera-bouffes, although the music was a *pasticcio*—a selection from various sources, popular, operatic, and even classical. Opera-bouffe proper had been tried at Covent Garden and the Lyceum —the *Grand Duchess* at the former theatre, and *Chilpéric* at the latter—but a market had hardly yet been created for this essentially Parisian production. I determined to import the article, and to change the character of the Gaiety bill by abolishing

drama or comedy-drama. Operetta still played the people in, and Alfred Wigan, with a small but competent company, still gave some of his unequalled character sketches, such as the Other Old Frenchman in the *Lucky Friday*, etc.; but the new chief piece of the evening was to be one of Offenbach's newest comic operas, with a clever book by two of his always clever librettists. Before the ground could be cleared for this change, a number of "benefits" had to be conceded and arranged, Miss Neilson taking one, and Mr. John Clayton taking another. This encouraged Mr. Alfred Wigan to ask for the same privilege, although benefits were specially barred in his agreement. Mr. Toole had stipulated for a benefit, and under the circumstances I could hardly avoid, in justice, placing Miss Farren and one or two other members of the company on the same footing. I never took a benefit myself, rightly or wrongly regarding every night that the theatre was open (and it was practically never closed) as my sole benefit above and beyond all others. If the performances at any time did not result in something that might be regarded as a "benefit," it was entirely the fault of my own managerial stupidity.

The theatrical profession in the sixties and seventies, if it aspired to the dignity of a profession in those days, was the only one which was constantly appealing to the public in the form of "benefits." Actors of all classes, bill-stickers, prompters, box-keepers, and even apparently prosperous managers,

MISS MARIE LITTON

were constantly appearing in the character of beggars. To hide the real nature of these appeals a fine word had been imported from the other side of the English Channel. The term *bénéficiaire* was used to designate the person who sends round the hat. Much in the same way as postmen tout for Christmas boxes, or waiters for gratuities, the actor sold tickets for his benefit. No class feelings seem to have been outraged by such touting, and it is therefore fair to assume that the profession at that time sanctioned benefits. Theatrical tradesmen knew that they had once or twice a year to purchase a number of tickets, and they made their arrangements and adjusted their prices accordingly.

Looked at impartially from the outside of the theatre, the custom, to say the least of it, would have been more honoured in the breach than in the observance. It was a survival of the bad old "palmy" times, and it is not yet quite dead. Its spirit still shows enough vitality to justify a sermon. The benefit system implied that the actor, unlike the author, the doctor, the lawyer, or the painter, was unable to obtain a fair night's wages for a fair night's work, and was compelled to piece out his income by collecting gifts or imposing fines, or it implied that he was always ready to make an extra market of his popularity and public position without any regard for professional dignity. A well-paid, well-applauded actor, who was worshipped by many and tolerated by all, had no claim to these benefits. If any claim existed, it was surely on the side of

the public. The great grocers, or butchers, or tailors, or hatters were not in the habit of sending round to their customers once or twice a year for great or little gifts as acknowledgments of merit, but were rather in the habit of sending gifts to their customers as acknowledgments of patronage. The actor was just as ready to acknowledge patronage, particularly from any Royal personage, or person of distinction, but it was only in a speech addressed to such persons after they have paid a fancy price for the privilege of hearing it. He received all, gave nothing, and demanded more. The author who provided the bulk and framework of the entertainment was never asked to share the "gate-money," or the gifts left in the plate, and was sometimes expected, if not asked, to pay for a seat at the table.

This system, so objectionable in many ways, was perpetuated by managers in town and country. A "star," to use theatrical slang, was engaged, not at a fair, straightforward price, but at a certain fixed sum and a "half-clear benefit." This usually meant half the gross receipts of the house, without any deduction being made for expenses. In other words, the "star" was asked to give his services to the house and the manager for a certain time at a nominal salary, with the chance of squeezing his fair remuneration out of his friends and the public. A theatre in the sixties and seventies that avoided benefits was as rare as a black swan, and an actor or actress who avoided benefits was even rarer.

Actors who feed on the breath of popular applause, who are never hissed, even for showing the worst possible taste, or for supplying the worst possible acting, are often inclined to defend benefits, as they bring the artist and the public together, and give the latter an opportunity of exhibiting their respect for the former. The public, who are always exhibiting their respect for the actor, are often asked to exhibit it still more, and probably to tolerate bad pieces and bad acting because they are assisting at a benefit. It is notorious that many experiments on the patience of playgoers were made at benefits which would never have been made at other times. Late in the sixties the old Adelphi favourite, Paul Bedford, took a "farewell benefit" at the new Queen's Theatre (now destroyed) in Long Acre. This was a right and proper benefit, but not so the performance. Mr. Sothern attempted to amuse the public as a Dundrearyfied "Othello," using the words of Shakespeare and not the doggerel of some burlesque hack, and the public, much to the astonishment and disgust of the actor, declined to be amused by such an outrage on the national poet. Mr. J. B. Buckstone—then the most popular and petted of low comedians—was induced to aid Mr. Sothern in the character of "Iago," and had the good sense, at the eleventh hour, to attempt nothing more than a somewhat unskilful reading of the part. Miss Madge Robertson (Mrs. Kendal), then a rising young actress, was also induced to degrade herself and her art by appearing in this scene

in company with Mrs. Chippendale and Mr. Walter Gordon. When the sounds of honest disapprobation could no longer be disregarded, Mr. Sothern defended the buffoonery on the ground that he was assisting at a benefit. The original sin of benefits not being enough, Mr. Sothern tried to add to it by every means in his power. If gentlemanly actors who take to the stage with the training of gentlemen could do no more than this to uphold the dignity of their art, what could we expect from inferior actors who had not had many advantages of education?

The spread of theatres, and the steady and consistent demand of enormous populations for theatrical and semi-theatrical amusements, ought to stimulate actors to throw off all such depressing vestiges of the days of their vagabondage as benefits and "ticket-nights." The growth of periodical literature and journalism has destroyed Grub Street and enabled the industrious writer to obtain a respectable if not a luxurious living, and the theatrical profession ought to be, in thought, word, and deed, as far above the low shifts and contrivances of old-time Bohemianism.

The work of Offenbach's which I had decided to produce was the *Princess of Trebizonde*, an amusing and perfectly inoffensive comic opera in three acts, then being performed at the Bouffes Parisiens in Paris in the winter of 1869–70—the last days of the pleasant Second Empire. I had seen the piece once, and went over to see it again, knowing that I should have some little difficulty in casting it musi-

cally with my existing company. On my second visit I was provided with an order for two seats from M. Offenbach, the composer. The secretary of the theatre was evidently depressed by such an application, and when a French official is depressed he shows it visibly. Depressed or not, he could hardly avoid honouring M. Offenbach's order—one of the *droits d'auteur* in France—but he had his revenge. He gave me the two seats, but demanded the *droits des pauvres*—a tax of ten per cent. on the face value of the tickets. I paid the money, and thought that England, in spite of the great butcher Napoleon's opinion, was not the only nation of shopkeepers. I had had several previous experiences of the courtesy of Parisian managers, and had long come to the conclusion that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for an English theatrical manager and journalist to get into a Paris theatre with a courtesy admission. A Government situation could probably be got as easily as a private box. It wants courage of no ordinary kind, when you have the permit, to face those three dreadful deities in full evening costume, who sit like three judges of appeal in the vestibule of the theatre and look like the three Anabaptists in the *Prophète*. At the Gaîté, with Frederick Boyle and George Augustus Sala, I was refused the common courtesy of an answer when we asked to speak to an actor (*not* an actress) on the stage; and on another occasion, when, with Captain Alfred Thompson, I wanted to see M. Sardou's great piece of

Patrie, the manager (M. Raphael Felix, the brother of Madame Rachel) was a little more polite. The seats were being sold in the streets at that detestable gutter auction which generally follows a money success. As a great favour, we were not asked to pay the gutter-tax or premium. The manager told one of the hawkers of the theatre that, as a great favour, we were to have two seats at the ordinary box-office prices—*au prix de location.*

The *Princess of Trebizonde* was brought out at the Gaiety as the Easter novelty of 1870. Mr. Toole represented "Cabriolo," the showman (a part played in Paris by Désiré); Miss Hughes (Mrs. Gaston Murray) was engaged for the part of "Manola"—the strong woman of the vagabond troupe, originally played by old Madame Thiérret; Miss Constance Loseby represented "Prince Raphael," the part played in Paris by Mdlle. Van Gheel; "Zanetta" was given to Miss Tremaine; "Trampolini" to Mr. Perrini; "Sparrowtrap," the tutor of "Prince Raphael," to Mr. J. Maclean; and "Prince Cassimir," the father of "Raphael," to Mr. R. Soutar. The most effective part in the piece, "Regina," the daughter of the showman, was reserved for Miss Farren, who had much of the peculiar and fascinating spirit of the original, the incomparable Mlle. Celine Chaumont. The capable critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, speaking of Mlle. Chaumont in the French piece, said: "Above all, little Mlle. Chaumont puzzles everybody who hears

her. With no more voice than that of a cat when you squeeze her tail, she contrives, by her artful singing, to put more expression into the music than could be imagined by less clever persons. All who would know how to sing without a voice should give heed to Mlle. Chaumont."

Every word of this would apply to Miss Farren's performance. It was her first appearance in opera bouffe, and she faced the ordeal triumphantly. Mr. Toole "worked up" his part in good low comedian style, adding much to the "words" provided by the adapter, Mr. Charles Lamb Kenney (a godson of the great Charles Lamb). The dresses were thoroughly French, designed by Alfred Thompson, and the production on the stage, including the scenery by Mr. Gordon, far surpassed in artistic delicacy the original production in Paris. The pages (girls, of course) were better looking and better dressed, and Herr Meyer Lutz, the clever and indefatigable conductor, turned them all into well-drilled chorus singers. The *Princess of Trebizonde* had only one fault, as far as London was concerned: it was born ten years before its time. Though the Second Empire was on its last legs, the spirit of the "Princess" was the spirit of the Empire.

M. Offenbach came over to see it—his first and (I believe) his only visit to London. Parisian authors and composers are not very active as travellers. The veteran and leading melodramatic author of France, now turned ninety (M. d'Ennery), has

never been in England. M. Offenbach was a quiet, modest man, evidently in delicate health: a very different man from Hervé or Emile Jonas. He stayed about a week, and passed his evenings chiefly at the few music-halls which London could boast of at that time. He saw much, so he said, which he could utilize in his pieces in Paris. In particular he picked out two singers and dancers, named Brian and Conolly (both now dead); and his judgment was shown to be right, as they afterwards became popular at the Théâtre des Variétés in Paris, where Charles Mathews and E. A. Sothern made only a partial success, although Mathews played in good French. Offenbach was a slight eater, and particular about his food, and he begged to be sent not to what he called an English parody of a French *café*, but to some thoroughly English tavern, where he could get the best food cooked in the plain English style. He was sent, of course, to "Simpson's" in the Strand, where he ate his saddle of mutton and his boiled potatoes quite like a perfidious Albionite.

JACQUES OFFENBACH

CHAPTER III

The Programme

MOST managers of theatres—intelligent or not intelligent—with a little smattering of literature, or no smattering at all, have a sneaking kindness for the so-called legitimate drama. This kindness is justified by a good and substantial reason. The "Legitimate Drama," or what is understood to answer to that title, is a drama whose authors are dead and whose copyrights have expired. Drama of this kind is not burdened with authors' fees, and, what is more, not with the presence of the authors at rehearsal. The manager may cut and mangle the piece to his heart's content, without fear of a stage quarrel or a legal injunction. The manager can cast the piece how he likes, and produce it when he likes, where he likes, and how he likes. He can play it with old stock scenery and hired dresses, and he can place it at the head or the tail of his bill, according to his own sweet and unchecked pleasure. Certainly there is much to be said in favour of the legitimate drama. Now comes the account *per contra*. Leaving Shakespeare out

of the question, so few plays exist that are worth the trouble and expense of revival. There is *The School for Scandal* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, and there is *She Stoops to Conquer* and *The School for Scandal.* It is Sheridan one day and Goldsmith the next, with the monotony of chop and steak, or steak and chop, as at an eating-house with no inventive imagination. Certainly the authors of the past have left a very limited legacy to the managers of the present.

I had only been in management about seventeen months when I thought it was time to dip into the brackish well of ancient comedy. I had Mr. Alfred Wigan on my hands to provide for—always a difficult man to fit with a dramatic character. We had spoken of Balzac's *Mercadet.* Alfred Wigan looked at the version prepared by George Henry Lewes, which was written, rehearsed, and acted in sixty hours—absolutely from Saturday to Monday—at the Lyceum Theatre (in a race against Webster) under the title of *The Game of Speculation.* This was, and is, the greatest theatrical *tour de force* on record, and this adaptation, with Charles Mathews's invaluable assistance, who played the chief character, was so well done, that Alfred Wigan hesitated to recommend a new version. The labour and responsibility of finding him a new part was thus thrown back on me, and I selected *The Relapse*, by Sir John Vanbrugh, which contained the effective character of "Lord Foppington." Vanbrugh, though of course vastly inferior to Sheridan and Goldsmith,

was a new name to conjure with, and he came within the radius of the "legitimate drama."

The preface to the play, which I printed in the programme, stated what I had done to make Sir John Vanbrugh's "restoration" workmanship acceptable :—

"This play is condensed and altered from the celebrated but now unactable comedy in five acts, by Sir John Vanbrugh, called *The Relapse*, which was written as a sequel to Cibber's *Fool in Fashion*. It was first performed at Drury Lane Theatre in 1697. Sheridan made an adaptation of this comedy, produced at Drury Lane in 1777, under the title of the *Trip to Scarborough*, which some of the critics said was not calculated to increase his reputation. Probably no adaptation could increase the fame of the author of *The School for Scandal*. Discarding Sheridan's plan, I have cut out all that portion of the comedy which justified the title of *The Relapse*, without losing anything that belongs to the character of "Lord Foppington." Like many badly-constructed modern dramas, *The Relapse* has two distinct plots, or such an operation could not have been performed."

The character of the performance is fairly and impartially stated in the following extract from the *Daily News* of May 9th, 1870. There were "notices" far less favourable and some far more favourable. The piece was calculated to produce much variety of opinion, and many diversified critical verdicts.

"The character of 'Lord Foppington' leaves nothing to be desired in the hands of so accomplished an artist as Mr. Alfred Wigan. The self-complacency, the bland stolidity, the complete disregard for everything beyond his own especial gratifications and petty vanities, are all admirably depicted, and the difficulty of portraying a selfish and heartless man, who, at the same time, is in every word and look a gentleman, and with whom the audience is at times even inclined to sympathise for the trick played upon him by his younger brother in robbing him of his intended wife, is overcome as few actors of the day have the genius to overcome it. Mr. Wigan's 'Lord Foppington' is a clever study of the old beaux of a past period, the make up is perfect, and he appears to have stepped from the Mall or from the chocolate house of 170 years since to the Gaiety boards. Mr. Wigan is well supported by the other members of the company, every one of which enters with great spirit into his or her part; Miss Farren especially making her mark as 'Miss Hoyden,' a character that has become the most prominent in the comedy, owing to the absence of Amanda and Berinthia from the present adaptation. Miss Farren is inimitable as the unsophisticated, boisterous girl, whose strict seclusion at her father's country house has led to an intense longing for town life and town pleasures at any cost to herself or others. Her first interview with young 'Fashion,' carefully but somewhat stiffly played by Mr. Lin Rayne, is a clever bit of natural acting, and is one

of the most amusing features in the piece. Her mingled awkwardness and forwardness, her girlish giggling at discovering her lover's arm round her waist, and her supreme satisfaction at being made love to for the first time in her life, are rendered with great spirit, although at times with a little too much of demonstrativeness. Mrs. Leigh is a good nurse, and Mr. Maclean a fair, if not wholly satisfactory, 'Sir Tunbelly.'

"The comedy is excellently and expensively put upon the stage, and the interior of Sir Tunbelly Clumsey's house in the second act is a masterpiece of stage furnishing. *The Man of Quality* may be pronounced a complete success."

The author of this notice was a very competent writer—Mr. William Moy Thomas. The patrons of the theatre were not fobbed off with "Restoration" comedy and nothing else. They had Offenbach's operetta, *The Rose of Auvergne*, by way of soup at the banquet, and after the comedy the same composer's *Princess of Trebizonde*, with the original cast —again a triple bill and a double company!

With the summer heat of July came another radical change in the programme—anything rather than close the theatre. Mr. Hermann Vezin was specially engaged, and Mr. Atkins, the Olympic melodramatic low comedian. Charles Reade's Princess's version of the *Courier of Lyons* was produced—a piece in which Charles Kean used to show his intense power in drama. In this piece Miss E. Farren was of great assistance as the inn-

keeper's boy, "Joliquet," a representation which proved her great versatility and real dramatic instinct. Nothing was spared to make the play effective—the French dresses of the Revolutionary period, and even "real horses" for the Lyons mail being provided. As in M. Offenbach's case, the author (or adapter) was satisfied, and this was the beginning of a long friendship between me and a double-handed writer who surpassed Dickens and Thackeray.

The last two authors pined for success on the stage, but never obtained it; but Charles Reade was equally successful as a dramatist and as a novelist. If I may judge by his letters to me, he was a prolific correspondent. He was always ready to take a theatre and produce his own dramas, or to back the work of his brain with the money in his pocket. When I saw Zola's *L'Assommoir* in Paris, in 1878, I felt that Charles Reade was the one man to adapt it, and when I returned to London I preached him into the task at the Garrick Club. While his version, called *Drink*, was being rehearsed at the Princess's, the management exhibited signs of financial timidity. Charles Reade was ready with his cheque-book. He took a large share of the risk, and a proportionate share of the profits with the result that, instead of merely receiving author's fees, he cleared many thousands of pounds (I believe about £20,000) by the venture. I received reams of his letters at the Gaiety, and I think the following communication on the subject

HERMANN VEZIN

of *Macbeth* is quite worthy of a place in the archives of that "Unique Theatre."

CHARLES READE ON MACBETH.

NOTE.—*This is a letter written to me in* 1874. *The recent publication of* CHARLES DICKENS'S *letters to* WILKIE COLLINS *has encouraged me to give it to the public.*—JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

"Do not say or think that no drama could succeed at 'the Gaiety.' A drama with close interest, and *plenty of laughs*, will do there or anywhere.

"You are now playing a drama, and one of the worst I ever saw. It is *Gabrielle* and water, *Nos Intimes* and water, *Frou-Frou* and water, *Supplice de Femme* and water—everything and water. Three first acts, all garrulity; last act, all anti-climax. [*Led Astray*, by Dion Boucicault.]

"From the failure of such a piece, in which, moreover, there is no English character, you can't infer that a masterpiece like *Two Loves and a Life* would fail.

"*Masks and Faces* is a comedy, and an interesting comedy, which is the class of pieces that may mark the Vaudeville and the Prince of Wales' Theatres.

"I could bring you the comedy, and Mrs. John Wood, the best Peg Woffington that ever was or will be. Soutar, with a hint or two from me, could play Triplet to perfection. Webster has

become too fast, and lets down all the scenes. Your own company can play the comedy, with Leathes as Pomander. So much for the Gaiety. Now for the Princess's. What is your objection to that theatre?

"A lot of money has lately been lost in it.

"But it has all been lost by mediocre pieces.

"Strong pieces have always made money there.

"It is in a great thoroughfare. Wet always draws customers into it. It holds a lot of money, and has paid with big pieces.

"It is down in the market, and I believe they would let it you for three months, and the right of going on.

"Now I will propose an experiment to you.

"Keep Thorne [an American actor] in the company, and try Shakespeare played rationally.

"Begin with *Macbeth*, and treat it as what it is—an operatic melodrama.

"1. Spend no money on castles and things. Go for quick acting and fine music.

"2. Chorus of one hundred voices, which have been offered me *gratis* by an enthusiast over the water.

"Two first-rate singing witches from the Gaiety, or elsewhere.

"Hecate, George Honey, whose bass is grander than any living Italian's, as the music of Locke is finer than any Italian composer's.

"The witches' incantations, and all the prophecies, are at present a dead failure for want of music. Turn them into recitations, and so give them that

grand and supernatural tone the poor silly actors have always robbed them of, with their bow-wow and hee-haw delivery, of the awful and mysterious.

"Restore the pictorial representation of the murder of Lady McDuff, and so point McDuff's subsequent distress.

"Cut out of McDuff's scene all that preliminary and useless bosh, when that young prig pretends he is a scoundrel, when he is only an ass all the time, and come to Hecuba at once.

"In the next scene don't bring on a stranger to describe the battle—that is the blunder of a novice, give that business to McDuff.

"Ryder McDuff.

"Thorne McBeth.

"Don't let the line of Kings go crushing down a raking piece, and pound the earth to show they are shadows. Draw them slowly and smoothly across the scene. Effective lime-lights in medium. The great singing scene. Manage the mounting to the skies of Hecate on improved system, and do great things with it. But, above all, let us rehearse the acting, and do away with the old style entirely. No more ladling out of lines syllable by syllable, no more—

"Oh, hor-raar—horraar—horr-aar.

"Specimen. Old style. The fellow that wakens the guests in the murder of Duncan always bawls and labours, and ladles out his words in dead silence. And, when he has quite done, the figures appear like so many Jacks-in-the-box, and some of them

come tamely toddling down the stairs, and they meet on the stage happy-go-lucky.

"New Style.

"HANG SHIELDS ON TWO PILLARS.

"Let the actor speak his speech in a wild rush instead of ladling out, and as he speaks rush about, and strike furiously on the shield with his sword.

"Let responsive cries and all the signs of the alarm spreading be heard at all the wings whilst he speaks, then clashing of weapons, and before the last word is out of the speaker's lips let two warriors with torches rush into the gallery, and at the same moment all the other guests burst from all the wings into the centre with one concerted movement, and at the same moment several red lime-lights, justified by the torches, gleam upon their shields and swords, and let them all come, pale with amazement and alarm, and not with their ordinary faces, as I always see it done.

"This is only one specimen out of a score. Nobody knows *Macbeth*, and what is to be done with it. It wants a dramatist to rehearse it, and with authority.

"Lady Macbeth (Miss Faucit), if she will play every night, or Miss Leighton, if she can be got. Now, could not two or three of us combine and try this under your management? I, for my part, would undertake the short improvements in the text, and to find the additional music required, with the assistance, of course, of a composer, whom I should pay, and to rehearse the melodrama in

earnest (two night rehearsals), and put brains into the performance. And I will back my judgment with money in proportion to the profit set apart for me in case of success.

"But I wish you would talk to me on matters dramatic. I hate writing sense and not being paid for it.—Yours sincerely,

"CHARLES READE."

Here are further letters from Charles Reade on the same subject, and quaint written introductions to me, given to several humble members of the dramatic profession :—

"*August 20th*, 1874.

"DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,—

"I want you to give me half an hour to talk about plays. I have by me at this time such a number of masterpieces, great and small, as I think no writer of reputation ever yet kept by him without finding a market. I will give you a list, with a comment or two :—

"No. 1. *Our Seamen.* A grand drama of incident by sea and land, hitherto played in the country as *Foul Play*, and always with great effect. Copy sent herewith.

"No. 2. *Two Loves and a Life.* This is a great drama of incident and character, and there is some of Taylor's [Tom Taylor's] best work in it, and some of my best work. It deals with incidents of the Rebellion of 1745, and *Clancarty* is not a patch

upon it. Was never run out in London. Shelved by Webster. Has not been performed this many years here, and I have recently repurchased the *sole right* of Webster.

"No. 3. *Masks and Faces.* Shelved this twenty years by Webster, and never played in the country except for benefits—that is to say, in the vilest and most slovenly way. This comedy rehearsed by me, and made sharp and effective in all the parts, is a sure success at a comedy theatre, the cast being sufficient. Recently repurchased from Webster. It is never too late to mend. Remodelled and the female interest strengthened—a sure card at a big theatre—the Princess's first.

"No. 4. *Dora.* A poetical pastoral in which the scenery is very important because it plays a part in the story. A drunken scene painter hurt us at the Adelphi, but over the water it was a prodigious success. This piece I myself have shelved for want of an actor and an actress, but I have now got them—Ellen Terry and John Ryder.

"No. 5. *Rachel the Reaper.* A powerful drama. Two acts. One scene, which scene I contribute complete. There are strong characters and as much story and plot as a five-act drama. Plays one hour and twenty minutes only.

"No. 6. *The Wandering Heir.* No scenery to paint. I have it all docked.

"No. 7. *The Robust Invalid.* (An adaptation from Molière.) Miss Farren as 'Toinette,' or Ellen Terry, if in the theatre.

"Of short pieces I am the cheapest author going. I only ask a moderate sum nightly.

"With large pieces I prefer the big game. Like to share after a sum. But then I will always back my big pieces with capital, if required. Will back them at the Gaiety, or the Princess's, if you like to venture. What I *must* not do at the present time is to go into *management*. I have a mountain of other work before me, and to me theatrical management is so absorbing that I should lose many thousand pounds' worth of time if I went into it. Please realize this situation. It is one without a parallel, and well worthy your consideration as a manager superior in intelligence to the old stagers.

"If you agree with me that these things are worth talking about, please make an appointment with me, afternoon or evening.

"I will only add at present that Ryder has offered to play 'Farmer Allen' for £5 less than his usual terms, so highly does he think of the part, and I believe he would play in *Two Loves and a Life*. Miss Ellen Terry is also desirous to play the part of '*Dora*.'

"CHARLES READE."

My answer to this long letter produced the following reply :—

"I think you must have misapprehended something in my long letter, or I must have given a wrong impression. I am far from doubting that the Gaiety is a very successful theatre, and I

think it owes its success to your admirable management before and behind. It will, I believe and hope, continue to succeed, although all pieces written by me should be excluded. But, on the other hand, I feel sure that its success would not be *diminished* by playing a piece of mine—drama or comedy, and I have both to offer at present, of which please take a note, and think of me should an opening occur to you.

"As to the other matter, I fear a better theatre than the Princess's is not likely to offer, and you seem to think ill of that theatre, so there is no more to be said on that head.

"CHARLES READE."

The following brief notes show his kindness, and his wish to help any one who had served him :—

"*June 30th*, 1875.

"DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,—

"The bearer is Miss Wilson, who has been on tour with me as a characteristic dancer. She has danced a negro dance in *The Wandering Heir*, hornpipe in *Foul Play*, and is sure to dance the *can-can* well. I gave her a guinea per week, and think her cheap."

* * * *

"The bearer is Mr. Shaw, of whom I spoke to you as a remarkable actor of small parts. He also does all utility business, and is baggage-master on

tours, etc. An invaluable servant in a theatre with small pretensions."

* * * * .

"The bearer of this is Mr. Craven, who has played 'Silas' in *The Wandering Heir*, and 'Penfold' in *Foul Play*, during my tour, which is now concluded. His pretensions as to salary are modest."

* * * *

"The bearer of this is Mr. Glenville, who played the Irish part in *The Wandering Heir*, and is extremely useful in a theatre."

"CHARLES READE."

These letters show Charles Reade in the character of a man of business, as *The Cloister and the Hearth*, not to speak of his plays, but only of his novels, shows him as a man of genius. His favourite expression applied to me often in our correspondence was "Old Fox, come to dinner." I used to joke him about the abnormal width of his trousers, saying that it was sinful waste to absorb so much cloth when hundreds of urchins in the slummy streets outside the "Garrick Club" were shivering in their bare legs. It was a great source of amusement to me to watch him writing letters in the "morning room" of that club. The more placid and benevolent he looked the more violent was his language. His favourite terms were "skunk" and "pirate," which he bestowed (on paper) on the people who stole his plots and

characters without payment. As a rule he was very well able to look after his literary property, and he invented the term "stage-right," to take the place in dramatic disputes of "copy-right." He was a great judge of old violins, wrote charmingly about them, and was often consulted to identify a Straduarius. He had a theory, and defended it in print, that every man, woman, and child was ambidextrous, and ought to use the left hand in preference to the right, to avoid becoming lop-sided. He was a great character, and a great writer, fair and just in his dealings, but no more sentimental in driving a bargain than Charles Dickens. If he had been a Scotchman, long before this he would have had a statue.

That the absolute abolition of fees, and the study devoted to the comfort of the public were fully appreciated, is proved by the following spontaneous press testimony in 1870 :—

The Times, December 16th, 1870 :—

A CONTRAST.

"*To the Editor of 'The Times.'*"

"SIR,—

"Last week my wife and I visited the Gaiety Theatre, and received every courtesy from the officials there—they took care of our umbrellas, hats, etc., showed us to our seats, and furnished us with programmes. On my offering a small gratuity, it was most respectfully but firmly declined.

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"Last night we went to the Holborn, and first my umbrella was demanded and *3d.* for taking charge of it. On reaching the top of the staircase my wife was required to leave her hat and *6d.* into the bargain, and on going into the balcony two programmes were forced into our hands, for which we were obliged to pay *1s.* On speaking to the manager he informed us that these are the proper charges—viz., *3d.* for an umbrella, *6d.* for a lady's hat, and *6d.* each for the playbills. Comment is superfluous.

"Yours obediently,

"*December* 15." "G.

The Lancet, July 23rd, 1870:—

VENTILATION OF THEATRES.

"Sir George Cornewall Lewis's remark, that life would be tolerable but for its amusements, will, at least in one aspect, be echoed by every playgoer. The heat, at present so intense during the day, is prolonged far into the night in our theatres, which, with some exceptions, might almost be utilised as cooking apparatus. To what purpose does the comedian enforce the maxim, 'Laugh and grow fat,' when the parboiled auditory is exuding at every pore? The tragedienne's pathos may be melting, but so is the 'house,' which is 'brought down' to an extent that even Banting never contemplated. As we have said, however, there are some exceptions to the tropical conditions observed

in our theatres, and we would advise the playgoer who wants to combine mental recreation with bodily comfort to visit the Gaiety, which our personal experience enables us to recommend as one of the most perfectly ventilated houses in London."

The evolution of the Gaiety Theatre was now destined to pass through another development—some thought a beneficial development. It was to become a temporary opera-house. Unfortunately English opera, standing alone, was a term of reproach, and my plan was to use the double company I possessed in light Offenbachian first and last pieces, placing the opera proper in the middle or at the end. Some of the papers spoke of this continuity of performances with some degree of wonder. The *Echo* (Aug. 23rd, 1870) said, "At a time when all the other theatres are closed or closing, the Gaiety begins a new season." Exactly! A theatre should no more close than an hotel or restaurant. The papers, as a rule, were very friendly. I may quote one or two paragraphs.

Mr. Howe, a very competent critic, and a son of an old and respected actor, wrote as follows :—

Morning Advertiser, August 23rd, 1870 :—

"Mr. John Hollingshead spares no exertion to render the Gaiety *par excellence* one of the leading attractions of the metropolis, wherein every taste may find something specially pleasing. Comic

opera, comic drama, the ballet, extravaganza, and burlesque are the best of their kind, and each is placed on the stage with every accessory of charming performers, picturesque dresses, and scenery which is certainly without rival even amongst our continental neighbours, now so differently occupied than they usually are at this season. The theatre itself is a study, as illustrating every modern architectural improvement which results in complete ventilation and perfect comfort. The general arrangements are of a character that secure complete attention and respect on the part of the *employés* in the various departments. Every visitor is struck with that contrast a perfect organization presents, since they are spared the confusion and embarrassment with which, elsewhere, less effective management has rendered them familiar. These are no light recommendations, particularly to those who come up by train and wish to be spared inconveniences that not unfrequently interfere with their enjoyment, and render it a matter of doubt whether the pleasures of an evening are worth the perils and risks of crush and delay."

The Echo, August 23rd, 1870 :—

"The new season, which commenced last evening at the Gaiety Theatre, promises to be one of unusual excellence. A company has been brought together which includes the names of several very popular singers and actors. The Gaiety Theatre is in every respect well adapted to the purposes of

an English opera house, and under its energetic management will, during the ensuing season, supply a want which has long been felt in the metropolis."

We began with a mixed bill of four pieces. A ballet of action, with Herr Carle and Mdlle. Emma Carle (from Niblo's Theatre, New York), and a competent company, opened the performances. This was followed by Planché's comic drama, *Peter Spyk*, in which an Anglo-Dutch comedian, named Morris, coming from America, made his first appearance in England. He was supported by Mr. J. Maclean, Miss Annie Tremaine, Miss Maria Harris, and others. After this came a one-act operetta, by Adolphe Adam, the musical father of Offenbach, called the *Poupée de Nuremberg*. It was turned into English under the name of *Dolly*. In Paris it was part of the repertory of the Opera Comique. The exponents of this operetta were Madame Florence Lancin, a trained and popular opera singer, Mr. J. D. Stoyle, a humorous operatic low comedian, Mr. Aynsley Cook, and Mr. W. H. Cummings, more celebrated in the concert-room than on the stage, and now the principal of the Guildhall School of Music. The final piece was Offenbach's musical extravaganza, *Trombalcazar*, with Miss Constance Loseby, Mr. J. D. Stoyle, Mr. E. Perrini, Mr. J. Maclean, and a full chorus and ballet.

Work on the Gaiety stage now began in real earnest. The bill of four short pieces was only a

temporary programme. In four days Offenbach's three-act opera-bouffe of *Barbe Bleue* was got ready, thanks to the indefatigable industry and zeal of Herr Meyer Lutz, the musical conductor. It was represented by the combined company, strengthened by Miss Julia Matthews as "Boulotte" (called the English Schneider), and an additional tenor singer. This was to have been Mr. Henry Haigh, but he was afraid to attempt the part of "Blue Beard" with so few rehearsals. We sent for Mr. Beverley, who had played it in the country, and he faced the difficulty, with only one "run through" with the orchestra. The other parts were represented by Miss Constance Loseby, Miss Tremaine, Mr. Perrini, Mr. J. D. Stoyle, Mr. Aynsley Cook, and Mr. J. Maclean. One small part was played by Mr. Ludwig, now the celebrated opera singer. The chorus and ballet were complete, and the piece was a success, with no signs visible of its hurried production. There being no room with *Blue Beard* for two more pieces, one only was played at the beginning of the evening, *Dolly*, with Mr. Charles Lyall in the part first played by Mr. W. H. Cummings. The English version of *Blue Beard* was written by Mr. Charles Lamb Kenney, and the costumes were designed by Captain Thompson, some of them being "lifted," according to time-honoured theatrical custom, from previous Gaiety pieces.

Miss Farren, returning from a short engagement in the country, had now to be provided for,

and Charles Dibdin's ballad farcical opera, *The Quaker*, was revived, and replaced *Dolly*. Miss Farren played "Lubin," and sang the songs allotted to the part with great cleverness. The other characters were in the hands of Aynsley Cook, J. D. Stoyle, Mrs. Leigh, and Miss Annie Goodall. The piece was brightened with a Maypole Dance.

When *The Quaker* had had a week or two, the *Beggar's Opera* (the condensed version) was put on, *Blue Beard* being still the substantial piece of the evening.

A fair opinion of the *Beggar's Opera* revival is given by Mr. Dunphie, the able critic of the *Morning Post*:—

Morning Post, September 17th, 1870:—

"But, allowing for the omissions necessary by reason of altered views with regard to things theatrical held at the present period, the opera was played last night without serious alteration, and with only one introduced song, 'Hurrah! for the Road.' Every one of the other songs was sung as written, and, with the original melodies which delighted audiences a century and a half ago, gave equal pleasure to the audience of last night. The characters were well displayed; the 'Mrs. Peachum' of Mrs. H. Leigh being a capital impersonation. Miss Constance Loseby made a most fascinating 'Polly,' acting with grace and singing in excellent style. Miss Tremaine gave a well-

designed interpretation of the part of 'Lucy'; Mr. Maclean's 'Peachum' and Mr. Perrini's 'Lockit' being both good of their kind, though none of the songs in the opera assigned to the parts of 'Peachum' and 'Lockit' were sung by them. Among the other songs, ''Tis woman that seduces all mankind,' the quaint ditty for 'Filch' was omitted. The last-named part was given by Mr. Stoyle with all the traditional flavour. The other characters of importance were 'Mat of the Mint' and 'Captain Macheath,' played respectively by Mr. Aynsley Cook and Mr. Beverley. [The one interpolation was George Herbert Rodwell's 'Hurrah for the Road,' sung by Mr. Beverley.] The audience demanded a repetition of Mat's song, 'Let us take the Road,' with the accompaniment of 'drums, trumpets, and viols,' as set by Mr. Handel."

I had to defend Miss Loseby from some critical remarks made in the *Standard* about her artificial mode of singing. She was accused of introducing *roulades*, etc., into "Cease your funning." "The version of this song," I said, "which she used last night was Miss Stephens's. If she had used Catalani's version, the *roulades* would have been more elaborate still."

Old English opera and music were put on one side for Italian music, and mellifluous Donizetti's *Betly*, reduced to one act, was presented. The description of it may be quoted from one of the many notices :—

Morning Post, September 27th, 1870:—

"Donizetti's music to *Betly* was presented last night in a most satisfactory manner, and, combined with the excellence of the acting, formed an entertainment of the most agreeable character. The subject of the opera is one with which a playgoing public has been already made familiar in more than one form, and has been the means of making the reputation of more than one popular actor. The most famous of the many forms in which the subject has been presented are the farce of *The Swiss Cottage*, in which Keeley played so finely, and *Le Chalet*, the first treatment of the subject in operatic style. In the last-named form Robson made the first famous impression upon the public mind at the old Grecian Theatre, where operettas and small farces made the greater part of an attractive entertainment. The operetta *Le Chalet* was written by Adam, and contained among other notable pieces a chorus, 'O vive l'amour,' which is not even yet forgotten. Although perhaps Donizetti's opera can claim priority in time of composition, yet Adam's version of the story, being known to English audiences some few years before the production of *Betly* at Her Majesty's Theatre, was the indirect cause of the small measure of popularity attained by *Betly*, with so great an artist as Alboni in the principal part. But since that performance, now more than twenty years ago, *Betly* has not been heard in London until last night, when it was very worthily done. Donizetti's music, though wanting in the

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brightness that characterizes Adam's opera, is light, and pretty, and beautifully instrumented, and the several melodies for each voice have the true Donizetti character—sweetness of melody tinged with melancholy. The efforts of the three artists to present the work in a proper manner were rewarded with every success.

"Madame Florence Lancia sang the *fiorituri* neatly and cleverly, and gave a modest and pleasing reading of her part. Mr. W. H. Cummings sang with great truth of expression and artistic feeling; his acting was thoroughly good and effective, realizing most completely the character of the simple-hearted lover, who has little courage and great resolution. There was no superfluous gesture, nothing obtrusive or out of place; but his notion of the part was just such as a truly clever and thoughtful man would imagine and carry out. Mr. Aynsley Cook sang well, but was scarcely happy as the boisterous soldier brother."

The operetta was preceded by a comic ballet, and followed by *Blue Beard.*

All these minor operatic efforts led up to the production of Hérold's opera of *Zampa*, Mr. Santley being engaged for the principal part, generally called in theatrical slang the *title-rôle.* It was produced October 8th, 1870, about six weeks after the opening of the season. What that season meant in work has just been shown. The English libretto was written by Alfred Thompson. It was said by some of the critics to be "superior to the run of such composi-

tions. The lyrical portions of the work flowed on harmoniously, and the ordinary dialogue was unusually pointed and appropriate." Others thought it mere rubbish. It answered its purpose. In a case like this it is better to let one or two of the contemporary records speak for themselves :—

The Era, October 9th, 1870 :—

"In speaking of the performance it gives us great pleasure to record one of the most legitimate successes ever achieved at the Gaiety. Long before the doors opened an immense crowd had assembled, and hundreds were unable to obtain admission. The appearance of Mr. Santley in such an important part naturally excited the greatest interest in the musical world, an interest which was certainly borne out by his extraordinary performance. Space will not permit of our dwelling upon the many admirable features of this remarkable personation. We would instance, however, Mr. Santley's exquisite rendering of the slow movement at the beginning of the second act as a specimen of cantabile singing which we have rarely heard surpassed. The applause and encore which resulted could not be resisted, and Mr. Santley repeated the melody with even greater effect than before. The sprightly air which follows was also given in the happiest possible manner, the light shade and animation which the singer imparted to the melody being irresistible, and but for its length would have led to another encore. In Mr. Santley's acting there was a lightness and buoyancy in the

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earlier portions of the opera, which formed an admirable contrast to the supernatural gloom of the scenes where the statue appears. That Mr. Santley had an extraordinary reception our readers will readily believe; indeed, we can hardly remember such an ovation as greeted the popular baritone when he first appeared. *Zampa* will be one of the hits of the season. Mr. Santley was well supported, Mr. Cummings singing the music of 'Alfonso' like a thorough musician, as he is, and Mr. Lyall displaying remarkable talent as 'Dandolo.' The effect produced in a small part was another proof added to the many which Mr. Lyall has given of unusual ability. In 'Daniel,' Zampa's mate, Mr. Aynsley Cook had less to do than the rest, but by his skill made the part of considerable importance. And now let us do justice to the ladies, and we must compliment Madame Florence Lancia upon the excellent effect produced by her rendering of 'Camilla.' Her singing of the ballad in the first act, but for the interruption to the dramatic situation, would have been encored. Miss Emmeline Cole as 'Rita' also sang prettily, and acted with considerable archness. The choruses were fairly done, and the band, under the admirable conducting of Herr Meyer Lutz, was as near perfection as could well be. The time of the various movements was taken with the utmost precision, and an excellent balance of tone preserved throughout, and the audience testified their appreciation of conductor and band by encoring the overture most heartily."

Previous to the opera, an operetta—*The Happy Village*—was performed, and Offenbach's *Trombalcazar* wound up the evening.

The reason why bill-posting and sandwich-men were not part of the Gaiety advertising system is best known by one of the big sample newspaper announcements. Such "displayed" announcements were almost unknown when the Gaiety Theatre started. A curious article might be written about theatrical advertisement. Old John Walter originally paid stage-door keepers, and such people, for information, and made announcements on the information so collected in the *Times* for nothing. Then came a small charge (perhaps a shilling!) for two or three lines in very small print, rigidly kept "under the clock." Over the clock was never trespassed upon by the play actors. The following advertisement (from the *Daily Telegraph*, October 15th, 1870) would have startled old John Walter and half London :—

GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND.—Sole Lessee and Manager, Mr. John Hollingshead.

GAIETY.—THE MUSICAL THEATRE of London.

GAIETY.—TO-NIGHT.

GAIETY.—ZAMPA.

GAIETY.—MR. SANTLEY,

GAIETY.—In ZAMPA. Three-Act Opera by Hérold.

GAIETY.—Madame FLORENCE LANCIA,

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GAIETY.—Mr. W. H. CUMMINGS,

GAIETY.—Mr. CHARLES LYALL,

GAIETY.—Mdlle. EMMELINE COLE,

GAIETY.—Mr. AYNSLEY COOK,

GAIETY.—INCREASED BAND and CHORUS,

GAIETY.—INCIDENTAL BALLET,

GAIETY.—In ZAMPA.

GAIETY.—NEW VERSION by Mr. Alfred Thompson.

GAIETY.—NEW DRESSES.

GAIETY.—NEW SCENERY by Gordon.

GAIETY.—Conductor, Herr Meyer Lutz. Stage manager, Mr. R. Soutar.

GAIETY.—ZAMPA, at 7.45 EVERY NIGHT.

GAIETY.—The TIMES, Oct. 12, 1870: "Mr. Santley had, for the most part, reason to be satisfied with his comrades. Madame Florence Lancia gave the music of Camilla with the facility and correctness of a practised artist, and acted with equal intelligence and feeling. Nothing could be more engaging and acceptable than Miss Emmeline Cole as Rita, Camilla's favoured companion; and nothing more careful and refined than all that Mr. W. H. Cummings had to sing in the somewhat lackadaisical character of Alphonso, Camilla's lover. Mr. Cummings is as yet a novice on the boards; but our lyric stage is greatly in want of singers so conscientious and, at the same time, so thoroughly educated. Mr. Aynsley Cook exhibited his accustomed vigour and broad idea of humour in the part of Daniel, the Corsair's chief mate; and Mr. Charles Lyall, as Dandolo, the timid bellringer, so frightened at the apparition of Zampa (a small part, of which Ronconi used to make very much), justified further hope that, should such a desirable institution as a permanent English opera ever be established in London, an admirable representative of certain subordinate, though by no means unimportant characters, is immediately at hand. With regard to the execution generally, we need only say that Herr Meyer Lutz, the conductor, deserves credit for the skilful manner in which he has used the materials at his disposal. The chorus is, on the whole, good—and this, remembering that an opera by Hérold, and not an opera by M. Offenbach or M. Hervé (M. Offenbach's shadow) is under consideration. Much, indeed, of the finales to Acts I. and II., the two most ambitious concerted pieces, was extremely well done. A line must suffice to say that Mr. Gordon has devised some very appropriate tableaux for the occasion—a Sicilian

coast scene (Act II.) being especially noticeable for its picturesqueness; and that the ballet and mise en scène, comprising an exceedingly well-managed representation of the 'Marble Bride,' are quite up to the standard to which the public have been accustomed at the Gaiety. The performance, as may be gathered from the foregoing remarks, was a complete success—not only for Mr. Santley, but more or less for all concerned; and the fall of the curtain at the end of each act was merely the signal for its being raised again."

GAIETY.—The DAILY TELEGRAPH, Oct. 12, 1870: "An English version of Ferdinand Hérold's penultimate opera 'Zampa'—we count for nothing the one-act bagatelle, 'La Médecine sans Médecin,' which came between it and the 'Pré aux Clercs'—was produced on Saturday with every prospect of a successful run. Nothing is easier than to justify the choice of this work. First heard at the Opéra Comique in May, 1831, when it saved the house from a premature and ignominious close, 'Zampa' has remained for thirty-nine years one of the most popular of French lyric dramas. Those amateurs are few and far between who do not know somewhat of its airs and choruses; while the melodious and amply developed overture belongs to every musical home. Remembering this, the Gaiety management must be credited with having taken a step obvious, useful, and, granting ordinary precautions, almost certainly successful. Mr. Santley's entrance as the Corsair was greeted with an 'ovation' of the most demonstrative kind, the gallery emulating stalls and boxes in doing honour to an artist who so well sustains the credit of native talent on the operatic stage. That he should essay a part written for a tenor may surprise those who do not know the nature of the music; and with what ease, by a few transpositions, it can be brought within the range of Mr. Santley's exceptional voice. The step is cause for congratulation, since it adds to his repertory a character which he embodies with remarkable felicity. It is superfluous to state that Mr. Santley rendered the music of 'Zampa' in perfect fashion from first to last. Where all was so good, it is difficult to choose the best. Briefly, Mr. Santley's success proved all that he himself could desire, and never was success better earned. There only remains to add that the overture was encored; that the curtain was raised after each act, special calls being made for Madame Lancia, Messrs. Santley, Cummings, and Lyall, at the close; and that the opera is placed upon the stage with sufficient taste and liberality."

GAIETY.—STANDARD, Oct. 10, 1870: "The introduction of an opera like 'Zampa' at the Gaiety is a departure from the usual menu provided for its supporters, but which the co-operation and engagement of Mr. Santley perfectly justified. Hitherto comic operas and musical extravaganzas have been considered the most appropriate works to be represented. Mr. Santley's appearance drew together an audience which filled every box and stall, and crammed to suffocation both pit and gallery. More enthusiastic listeners could not well be desired."

GAIETY.—DAILY NEWS, Oct. 10, 1870: "The opera has been well placed upon the stage. A compact orchestra is engaged, comprising some excellent instrumentalists of the opera bands. A well-selected chorus, fairly balanced with the orchestral power, was very efficient throughout. Some picturesque ballet action has been introduced in the second act. The fall of the curtain was followed by long and continued applause."

GAIETY.—MORNING POST, Oct. 11, 1870: "The opera is magnificently put upon the stage, the scenery is beautiful, the dresses picturesque, the choruses well sung, and the grouping of the subordinates effective."

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GAIETY.—ECHO, Oct. 10, 1870: "Scenery, chorus, and dresses were unexceptionable, and added in no small degree to the charm of the performance, which was an unequivocal success."

GAIETY.—OBSERVER, Oct. 9, 1870: "For once in a way we had the pleasure of seeing a pretty chorus, and we now know that it is possible to get rid of the extraordinary chorus ladies who have hitherto been inseparable from opera."

GAIETY.—ZAMPA, EVERY NIGHT, at 7.45.

GAIETY.—Preceded at 7 o'clock by

GAIETY.—The HAPPY VILLAGE,

GAIETY.—An Operetta-Pasticcio,

GAIETY.—And followed at 10 o'clock by

GAIETY.—TROMBALCAZAR,

GAIETY.—MUSICAL EXTRAVAGANZA

GAIETY.—By OFFENBACH.

GAIETY.—Miss JULIA MATTHEWS.

GAIETY.—Mr. STOYLE.

GAIETY.—Miss LOSEBY.

GAIETY.—Miss TREMAINE.

GAIETY.—Mr. PERRINI.

GAIETY.—Mr. MACLEAN.

GAIETY.—Herr CARLE and Mdlle. E. CARLE.

GAIETY.—Mrs. LEIGH, Mr. Tempest, Miss Egerton, Miss Love, Miss Maxwell, Miss Herbert, Miss Maria Harris, &c.

GAIETY.—The LARGEST COMPANY in LONDON.

GAIETY.—NO FEES.

GAIETY.—Prices from 6*d.* to 2 guineas.

GAIETY.—BOX OFFICE open ten to five.

GAIETY.—Open 6.30; Begin 7; Close 11.15.

GAIETY.—Mr. J. L. TOOLE at CHRISTMAS.

GAIETY.—Miss E. FARREN at CHRISTMAS.

No theatre is considered to be thoroughly established without its baptism of fire. The Gaiety went through this ordeal, fortunately a very slight one.

Daily News, October 15th, 1870:—

"ALARMING FIRE AT THE GAIETY RESTAURANT. — Considerable excitement was occasioned last evening by a report that the Gaiety Theatre was on fire. The alarm was caused by clouds of smoke coming from the cellars of the restaurant, immediately adjoining the theatre, and the 'call' for engines was rapidly responded to, no fewer than eight steamers being soon present. In the meantime it was discovered that the straw and wine hampers in the cellars had become ignited, it was supposed, by a lighted fusee being thrown down. Fortunately the fireman engaged at the theatre was at hand, and with the assistance of others succeeded in keeping the fire from extending to the theatre itself, or to the upper part of the restaurant. It was fortunate the fire happened

before the theatre was opened, otherwise a serious panic might have resulted. Mr. Hollingshead, the lessee of the theatre, had the following notice posted at the several entrances.—'The fire at the restaurant will not interfere with the performance this evening'; but such was the alarm experienced by visitors, that the smell of fire led several to leave the house shortly after their arrival. The subjoined letter has been forwarded us for insertion:—(To the Editor of the *Daily News*:)—Sir—Allow me to state that the slight fire in the Strand last night has in no way interfered with the business of the Gaiety Theatre. It occurred in a cellar of the house next door, protected by iron, stone, brick, and concrete, and a long distance from the interior of the theatre.—JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

Outside the Gaiety was another and bigger fire, and another and bigger drama. The Franco-Prussian war had entered upon its last stage. The Prussians were besieging Paris.

CHAPTER IV

Invention of the Matinée—Infinite Variety

THE next change in the programme at the Gaiety —the "greatest Variety Theatre in the world," as Barnum would have called it—is best described in the words of a leading daily paper. The bill now was a quadruple bill.

The *Standard*, November 21st, 1870 :—

"*Zampa* having been withdrawn from the bills, after a most successful run of several weeks, in order to prepare for the representation of Auber's charming opera *Fra Diavolo*, in which Mr. Santley is to take the principal character, the *hiatus* in the programme was filled up on Saturday evening with Dibdin's comic operetta *The Waterman*, the chief attraction being Mr. Santley's 'Tom Tug,' a character in which it would be impossible for him to appear without creating a *furore* amongst the admirers of the lyrics of a past age. It is nearly a century since *The Waterman* was first performed, whilst the circumstances which produced it, together with Dibdin's exciting naval songs, have become memories of the past. That this writer's stirring poetry helped in no small degree to form the character of

our brave seamen in perilous times, we have the authoritative opinion of one of England's greatest statesmen. Even now some of his songs, full of the praise of virtue and truth, love of country, home, and freedom, are not without their influence, and cannot be too highly recommended. The waterman's songs, sung as they were by Mr. Santley on Saturday evening, were soul-stirring to a degree, producing a sensation amongst the large audience assembled rarely observable in an English theatre. The character of 'Tom Tug' has hitherto been thought the *rôle* of a tenor voice. In the three facsimiles of programmes printed with the book of words, the singers who undertook the character in the years 1774, 1838, and 1855 are given respectively as Mr. Bannister, Mr. Braham, and Mr. Sims Reeves, all noted tenors.

"Mr. Santley made two of the songs suitable to his voice, viz., 'And did you not hear of a jolly young waterman?' and 'Then farewell, my trim-built wherry,' but instead of giving the 'Bay of Biscay,' he introduced 'Hearts of Oak.' The result was, as Boswell said, 'a joyous riot.' Never, said Boswell, did I see men so delighted with a song as my hearers were with 'Hearts of Oak.' '*Cuore di querco*,' cried they. 'Bravo, Inglese.' His audience were Corsicans. That English hands and feet, as well as voices, can express approval of this fine song was unmistakably proved on Saturday evening. There were other interpolations which, however excellent, are nevertheless out of place in

one of Dibdin's little operas, and may justly be objected to; but the success of the whole performance was complete, and the applause Mr. Santley had to encounter was perfectly deafening. Every admirer of the great English baritone should see him as 'Tom Tug.'

"*The Waterman* was preceded by *The Happy Village*, a pasticcio, and by Donizetti's opera *Betly*.

"The performance concluded with Offenbach's amusing musical extravaganza *Trombalcazar*."

Auber's *Fra Diavolo* being ready, the bill was changed again on November 24th, and this charming opera—the tenor part being transposed to suit Mr. Santley's light and sympathetic baritone voice—was produced, with bright dresses and a picturesque ballet. The opera was preceded by the operetta, *Michel and Christine*, and followed by Offenbach's *Trombalcazar*, with Miss Julia Matthews.

The cast of *Fra Diavolo* was: "Zerlina," Madame Florence Lancia; "Lady Allcash," Miss Tremaine; "Lord Allcash," Mr. C. Lyall; "Lorenzo," Mr. Arthur Byron; "Beppo," Mr. Aynsley Cook; "Giacomo," Mr. Stoyle; and "Fra Diavolo," Mr. Santley. The beautiful serenade, "Young Agnes," was the only vocal piece that suffered by the transposition.

The excellent criticism by Mr. Henry Hersee in the *Observer* of November 27th, 1870, is well worthy of quotation as a description of the production:—

"However much Mr. Santley may be anxious to free himself from the fetters of his own line, and to

use his glorious voice to the best advantage in the most telling *rôle*, he will still be known best and appreciated most in these round, rich songs which fall properly to the baritone. Charming and fanciful as was Mr. Santley's singing of 'Young Agnes, beauteous flow'r!' when with mandolin in hand he gave the mock serenade, it was in the fierce, rollicking brigand song at the commencement of the third act that he came back to us the Santley as of old. He is not a singer of love-songs—a lyrist for the lute. He is best when he sings of wine and war, when he has a gun on his shoulder and a sword in his hand. If Mr. Santley's 'Fra Diavolo,' from a musical point of view, is not one of his triumphs, it is at any rate an interesting experiment. There can be no question about the success of the performance dramatically speaking. Until lately Mr. Santley was not considered on the lyric stage to shine as an actor, but we would appeal to all who have closely studied the stage to justify us in our assertion of his superiority to most English actors. Take his mock love scene, for instance, with 'Lady Allcash.' There is a spirit in his utterances, a 'go' and enthusiasm in his manner, and a certain refined elegance in his action—rare qualities which we look for in vain and long for perpetually when we see the ordinary young English actor make love. Take again the dramatic *finale* of the opera. Watch 'Diavolo's' caution and hesitation as he is gradually led into the snare by 'Beppo's' treachery; notice the sullen, hang-dog look he assumes when he finds he has been betrayed and

stalks off to execution. See with what passionate energy he turns round and strangles one of the guard, and flings him headlong down a precipice, and, when shot, mark how he concentrates his power for one final death struggle with 'Beppo,' the traitor. It is, altogether, a very fine specimen of melodramatic acting.

"Madame Florence Lancia sang the music of 'Zerlina' with great taste, again and again showing the excellence of the school in which she has been educated. She was encored more than once, and acted very prettily, particularly in the bedroom scene. Mr. Byron unfortunately has no notion of acting, which is a fault made rather prominent in the case of a young soldier-lover like 'Lorenzo.' He has a good voice, but he does not quite know how to use it. His best song was spoiled by attempting a little too much. Mr. Charles Lyall, who played 'Lord Allcash,' is admirably funny. He appears to us to be a comedian of great talent, and sang his music like a musician. Miss Tremaine was very useful as the 'Cockney Lord's Lady,' and Messrs. Stoyle and Aynsley Cook were two of the most repulsive villains we ever set eyes upon. They had not much to do, but that little was well done. The make-up of both was perfect. The mounting of the opera from first to last is excellent. All is bright, new, and in good taste. The mountain and water-fall scene in the last act is a perfect picture; and softening as is the influence of so many beautiful views, and so much tasteful decoration, we cannot

fail to wonder how so few theatres pay attention to that general completeness which is such an admirable feature at the Gaiety."

The Christmas entertainments produced a total change in the bill, and they were put on the stage, as usual, without closing the theatre. The Gaiety never closed for rehearsals. The programme consisted of a comic ballet called *Tartuffe*, a short drama called *A Christmas Story*, and a new and original opera-bouffe called *Aladdin II.*

The following description of the new pieces in the *Morning Post* is not too favourable, and not too critical, and was written by the dramatic critic of the paper, Mr. Dunphie. It appeared December 26th, 1870 :—

"The drama, arranged by Mr. Dion Boucicault, is an adaptation of Charles Dickens's story [he might have put the late Charles Dickens, who died in the summer of that year] 'The Cricket on the Hearth,' introduced by a prologue, in which 'Oberon' and 'Titania' have something to do ; but as there is neither wit nor sense in the introduction it would be far better to place it between inverted commas, and so omit it in the representation. The actual drama itself was well done, and was most splendidly acted. Mr. J. L. Toole made his reappearance at the theatre, and played the part of 'Caleb Plummer' with so much true pathos and genuine art that the audience was powerfully moved by the extraordinary talent of the actor. As it is certain that every one who can will not fail to witness this most perfect

representation, no greater inducement can be offered than the announcement of the fact that Mr. Toole has succeeded in realizing 'Caleb Plummer' of Dickens in a completely satisfactory style. Mr. John Maclean is a most excellent 'John Peerybingle'; his acting, forcible, but not overstrained, was very effective. The unthankful part of 'Tackleton' was assigned to Mr. J. D. Stoyle, whose make-up was picturesquely repulsive, and his acting was characteristic of the part. 'Ned Plummer' was performed by Mr. H. Vaughan, an actor new to these boards, and probably new to any boards. Miss Carlotta Addison was an excellent 'Dot,' and Miss Marie Dalton, who made her first appearance at this theatre in the character of 'Bertha,' the blind girl, proved by her acting in a very difficult part how excellent a choice had been made in engaging her. Miss Marston had little else to do but to look pretty, and it is perhaps superfluous to describe how successful she was. Miss E. Farren, as 'Tilly Slowboy,' was rather more energetic that the 'Tilly Slowboy' of the story, but her acting and appearance were wonderfully effective. At the conclusion of the second act all the characters appeared in succession in obedience to the enthusiastic wish of the audience, and loud cheering and applause at the conclusion of the piece showed that the Christmas story had been happily and successfully told.

"The burlesque of *Aladdin II.*, which followed, is perhaps one of the most superb productions of its kind, as far as scenery and accessories can be taken,

MR. J. L. TOOLE

that has been produced for many years. The author of the burlesque, Mr. Alfred Thompson, has designed the dresses, which are of the most beautiful, tasteful, and accurate description, so that the study of costume as displayed upon the many elegant figures concerned, the grace of the ballet, and the marvellous dancing of two extraordinary men who fall into one hole in the stage to be shot up through another, the acting, the wit, real wit, and many other matters found in burlesque form the truest attractions of the theatre. So much care, thought, and expense displayed in the production must undoubtedly meet with a true recognition; for, for example, the dresses are not merely accurate imitations of the Japanese style of costume, but they are as beautiful in quality of material as though designed and intended for wear among the higher orders among the far-away people. But it is not alone in costumes that lavish taste has been displayed; the best obtainable actors, the most acceptable actresses, beautiful scenery, and, lastly, that which is regarded least but is of most value, true wit, is to be found in the work. The burlesque, as a literary production, is exceedingly clever, no attempt being made to force meanings from words in the wide and wild sense usually encouraged by most burlesque writers, the only puns being used after the same excellent method adopted by Hood, the pun being a play, and not a bear-fight, upon words. The characters introduced are clever, and, to some extent, novel, and the actors chosen to

interpret the parts are as original in their development of the characters as it is possible to desire. The sprightly grace and gaiety of Miss Farren as 'Aladdin,' the ease and *abandon* of Miss Loseby as the 'Princess,' the droll figure of Mr. Lyall as the 'Remembrancer,' in his willow-pattern plate costume and his marvellous eyes, the gorgeous appearance of Mr. Stoyle as 'Ozokerit,' somewhat Persian rather than Japanese; the prominent 'Submarine,' of Mr. Maclean, the extraordinary, yet not repulsive, 'Spirit of the Lamp'; the graceful elegance of Miss Wilson as 'Chalybea'; and the wonderful, indescribable, and irresistible make-up of Mr. Toole as 'Kokliko,' may be reckoned as not only triumphs of burlesque, but as victories in individual art. The costumes of the water nymphs, though not historical, are fanciful, if not absolutely accurate. The scenery is most beautiful, and the burlesque will win success for itself. The libretto is so clever that, unlike most of the books of modern burlesques, it is actually good to read."

Mr. Dunphie was quite right in drawing attention prominently to the scenery and dresses. *Aladdin II.* was the first Japanese spectacle ever put upon the London stage. It was received with very diversified opinions by the Press, but it was the most successful piece yet produced at the Gaiety. Its run, but for an existing contract for the return of Mr. Santley at Easter, 1871, might have been prolonged for nine or ten months, or even longer. At the present day it would have kept the stage with-

out a break for two or three years. It did much to popularize Japanese dresses, furniture, and materials in London, and to continue the "craze" which began in Paris. Alfred Thompson was very clever and tricky with his costumes. He was the first man to utilise upholstery cretonnes for dresses, and this cheap material, at a distance, under the glamour of stage lights, looked like the most expensive tapestry products of Lyons. His embroideries, to use theatrical slang, were "faked." On a groundwork of white satinette he stencilled patterns, with brown "smudge," rubbed across a perforated piece of paper. When the paper was removed the pattern was visible on the satin, and had the appearance on the stage of elaborate needlework. Duchesses wrote to know where they could buy this costly and unique material for ball dresses. They were not told the whole truth, but just enough to pacify them. Alfred Thompson could not only design a dress, but, like M. Worth, of Paris, if necessary, he could "fit" and make one. He ought to have started a fancy millinery business, and made a fortune.

In the early part of 1871 I made another theatrical experiment. I invented the Experimental and Miscellaneous Morning Performance. *Matinées*, so-called, of Christmas pantomimes had long been common, and occasional afternoon representations were given of any exceptionally popular drama running in the evening, but my plan was to invite trial trips of actors, actresses, authors, and pieces, without much

regard for the old restrictive principles of management. I not only believed in competition, I positively revelled in it. It brushed the cobwebs out of my brain, and saved me from getting rusty. I had free trade in my blood, and according to many people was not responsible for my actions.

The unfortunate people who had most cause to complain of this "new departure" were the dramatic critics and reporters. Never a highly paid body of journalists (I speak with six years' experience as a dramatic reporter in the "sixties" on a leading daily London paper), they had to do double and treble work for the same money. When these morning performances got into full swing, which they soon did, the critics had almost to live in the Gaiety Theatre.

If they did not altogether welcome these "innovating" representations, they discoursed learnedly (more or less) on the habits and customs of the ancients. It was the newspaper reader's own fault —the man on the knifeboard—the student who reads as he runs—if he was not made familiar with the early theatrical hours of old Greece and Rome, and the mid-day Shakespearian performances in the time of Elizabeth.

These *matinées* did a little for the drama, and those who get their living by it. Mrs. Bernard Beere made her first appearance at a Gaiety *matinée*; so did Miss Helen Barry, Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, and Miss Alice Lingard on her return to

England. Mr. Henry Compton made his last appearance on the stage at a Gaiety *matinée* as "Mawworm" in the *Hypocrite*, playing with Samuel Phelps and Ibsen as a dramatist. Under the superintendence of Mr. William Archer, Ibsen, the "Seer," "Diviner," "Thinker," "Archimage," "Master Builder of the Modern Stage," was introduced to the gaping English multitude at the same Temple of Horse-collar worship. Mrs. Keeley was induced to emerge from her retirement to play in several afternoon performances; and if it had not been for her family, she would have attempted "Jack Sheppard." Joseph Jefferson, Sims Reeves, Mr. Willard, and several others varied the programmes at different times. Rival companies, even from the Strand, to say nothing of Islington and Chelsea, were induced to show a Gaiety public what they could do in a theatre better constructed than their own, and under a manager with no theories and no prejudices. From the gentle art of grinning through a horse-collar to the legitimate rubbish that amused our grandfathers and grandmothers in the palmy days of the drama, all were welcome and assured of a fair hearing and liberal payment. The motto of the theatre was, "The devil take the hindmost."

Charity has always been held to cover a multitude of sins, and of course the first of these *matinées* was a "benefit performance." Once started, they never ceased for sixteen years, and at last reached the number of nearly a thousand, which is equal

to more than three years of continuous nightly performances.

The stage was never idle for a moment, except during a few hours of the night and early morning. The pock-marked boards—like the old hazard table at the Kildare Street Club in Dublin—were ploughed deep with the furrows of human folly.

Under these circumstances the first *matinée* programme is certainly entitled to a place in the history of the Gaiety Theatre.

GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND

A GRAND MORNING PERFORMANCE
will be given
ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 1871,
for the benefit of the
ROYAL DRAMATIC COLLEGE FUND.

Doors open, 1.30. Begin, 2. Carriages at 5. PRICES AS USUAL.
NO FEES.

The Programme will consist of

BARDELL v. PICKWICK.

The Trial Scene from Pickwick (by the kind Permission of Messrs. CHAPMAN & HALL),

Arranged for the Stage by Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, from the late CHARLES DICKENS' Special Reading Copy.

Sergeant Buzfuz	Mr. J. L. TOOLE
Sam Weller	Miss E. FARREN
Judge Stareleigh	Mr. J. D. STOYLE
Mr. Winkle	... Mr. R. SOUTAR

INVENTION OF THE MATINÉE

Sergeant Meek	Mr. H. VAUGHAN
Mrs. Cluppins	... Mrs. H. LEIGH
Old Weller	Mr. J. MACLEAN
Usher	Mr. FISH

Mrs. Bardell, Mr. Pickwick, Counsel Dodson and Fogg, etc., by other Members of the Company.

The Costumes kindly lent by Messrs. SIMMONS, Costumiers, of Tavistock Street.

Solo Violoncello (Fantaisie) "La Fille du Regiment" *Servais*

M. AUGUSTE VAN BIENE.

Prinipal Violoncello of the Gaiety Theatre.)

MR. SANTLEY

Will kindly Sing the SCENA (Opening of the Second Act) from *Zampa.*

To conclude (by the kind Permission of JOHN BOOSEY, Esq.) with OFFENBACH'S Successful Opera Bouffe, in three Acts, called

THE PRINCESS OF TREBIZONDE.

WITH THE ORIGINAL CASTE.

Cabriolo	Mr. J. L. TOOLE
Prince Casimir	... Mr. R. SOUTAR
Trampolini	Mr. E. PERRINI
Dr. Sparrowtrap	Mr. J. MACLEAN
Regina	Miss E. FARREN
Prince Raphael	Miss CONSTANCE LOSEBY
Manola	Mrs. H. LEIGH
Zanetta	Miss ANNIE TREMAINE

The Band and Chorus under the Direction of HERR MEYER LUTZ.

Conductor	Herr MEYER LUTZ
Stage Manager	Mr. ROBERT SOUTAR

"20, TAVISTOCK ST., W.C.,
"*January 26th*, 1871.

"DEAR SIR,—

"I have the great pleasure of informing you that at a meeting of the Council yesterday, a special and most cordial vote of thanks was passed to you for your great exertions, the kind use of the theatre, and the generous payment of the advertisements in connection with the morning performance on the 24th for the benefit of the Royal Dramatic College.

"Your cheque for £192 14*s*., and Lord John Hay's donation of £5, were handed to the Council by Benjamin Webster, Esq., and gratefully received by them and duly placed upon the minutes.

"Yours truly,
"J. W. ANSON, *Sec.*

"J. HOLLINGSHEAD, ESQ."

On the first of February a peculiar *matinée* was given, which may be described in the words of the *Era* of February 6th, 1871 :—

"There is evidently no anxiety on the part of the management of the Gaiety Theatre to hide dramatic lights under bushels. In a large establishment of the kind all cannot come to the front on every possible occasion, and it would be contrary to human nature to suppose that several of the seemingly neglected do not imagine themselves quite as good, if not superior, to the privileged. Under these circumstances, Mr. John Hollingshead, in a frank and liberal manner, placed his theatre on Tuesday

morning at the disposal of all those who wished to show what they could do. The aspirants to histrionic honours are not amateurs in the strict sense of the term. Many of them know the boards pretty well, and have trod them, in one way or another, for many years. But they have not come to the front hitherto, and have been panting for that long-looked-for opportunity which is to make their names as popular and familiar as those of their more fortunate brothers and sisters. Now, we consider the step taken by the management highly creditable. It shows there is no spirit of favouritism rife, and that Mr. Hollingshead is ready and willing to encourage industry and emulation, and to purchase a good article when he can find one. The enterprise is creditable alike to manager and company. Looking at the entertainment, therefore, in the light of a struggle which every plucky man and woman makes in the course of a lifetime, it would be uncharitable, if not ungracious, to criticise the performance from a very high standpoint. We may fairly assert that the large audience, suddenly and mysteriously collected from all parts of London, was scarcely prepared for such promising efforts on the part of all concerned. The ladies were certainly better than the gentlemen; but one and all showed that though they do not boast genius, they at least exhibit the art of imitation and an evident and hearty love for the profession they have espoused."

The programme of this performance is worth preserving, as it was probably the first of its kind,

though it may not be the last. Mr. Wilson Barrett last year (1897) at the Lyric Theatre gave a similar opportunity to the "understudies" in the *Sign of the Cross.*

PROGRAMME OF A DRESS REHEARSAL

(By kind permission of JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, Esq.),

ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1ST, 1870.

The Performance will commence at 1.30 with the admired Drama, by Messrs. MORTON, entitled

ALL THAT GLITTERS IS NOT GOLD.

Sir Arthur Lassell	Mr. EDWARD NORTON
Jasper Plum	Mr. LUDWIG
Stephen Plum	Mr. W. H. GRIFFITHS
Frederick Plum	Mr. GEORGE HARVEY
Toby Twinkle	Mr. J. B. RAE
Harris	Mr. JAMES DALTON
Lady Leatherbridge	Miss APSEY
Lady Valeria Westendleigh	Miss GRESHAM
Martha Gibbs	Miss WALLACE

Factory Girls, Workmen, &c.

After the Drama

A DRUM SOLO BY MR. WOODHOUSE

As played by him in presence of Her Most Gracious Majesty THE QUEEN and the ROYAL FAMILY.

DESCRIPTION.

Troops leaving quarters and retiring in the distance—Suddenly they appear in the enemy's outposts—The advanced guard and picket exchange shots—Skirmishers are thrown out and the engagement becomes general; it gradually subsides and the victorious party return to their encampment.

INVENTION OF THE MATINÉE

Duet ... ... "Suoni la Tromba" ... *I Puritani*

Messrs. LUDWIG and VACOTTI.

To conclude with the Musical Farce of

WATERMAN.

Tom Tug	Mr. GEORGE HARVEY
Bundle	Mr. JAMES DALTON
Robin	Mr. W. H. GRIFFITHS
Mrs. Bundle	Mrs. HENRY LEIGH
Wilhelmina	Miss A. TREMAINE

These Ladies have kindly consented to give their assistance.

Doors open at One o'clock, Performance to commence at half-past One precisely.

Herr MEYER LUTZ will preside at the Pianoforte.

Stage Manager	Mr. J. MACLEAN
Prompter	Mr. H. R. TEESDALE
Acting Manager	Mr. PERRINI
Costumes by	Mr. HASBERY and Assistants
Properties by	Mr. BARNETT and Assistants
Machinery by	Mr. KNIGHT and Assistants
Gas by	Mr. PEPPALL and Assistants
Perruquier	Mr. IMRIE

During the Interval the Band of the E Division of the Police (by the kind permission of the Commissioners) will perform a CHOICE SELECTION OF MUSIC.

Mrs. Henry Leigh and Miss A. Tremaine were two important members of the company who gave their assistance. Messrs. Ludwig and Vacotti were two choristers, the first being the gentleman I have before alluded to, who became (and is still) a most distinguished singer in English opera. He created the part of Wagner's "Flying Dutchman" in the Carl Rosa Opera Company.

At the beginning of March a new drama by Mr. H. J. Byron, called *Wait and Hope*, was produced, with certain additions to the company. It replaced the *Cricket on the Hearth*, and was not really required, as *Aladdin the Second* was filling the theatre; but Mr. Toole required a new play to take on his annual country tour, and I arranged to produce it. The new engagements were Mr. W. H. Vernon, Mr. J. G. Taylor (who remained long at the theatre), and Miss Violet Cameron, then a child, who had to play a child's part. The piece had all Mr. Byron's cleverness and knowledge of stage-craft, and it fully answered its purpose. Attempts were made with perfect justification to break it on the critical wheel like a good many more Gaiety butterflies; but nothing at the Gaiety stood alone, and success was averaged and divided amongst the good, the bad, and the indifferent productions.

The varied and regular *matinées* at this time received the following notice in the *Daily Telegraph* of March 6th, 1871, on Mrs. Keeley's appearance :—

"The increased interest and growing importance of the morning performances at the Gaiety became conspicuously manifest on Saturday, when the commodious theatre, filled at an early hour by a fashionable and most appreciative audience, was found unable to receive an equally large number anxious to obtain admission. Kept entirely apart from the evening representations, these day performances are always characterized by some special

feature of attraction, and on this occasion it was the honoured name of Mrs. Keeley that gave a distinctive value to the programme. Yielding to earnest solicitations, Mrs. Keeley repeated on the boards of the Gaiety that admirable assumption which so delighted the audience assembled at the Adelphi on the night of Madame Celeste's farewell benefit. The strong feeling of personal friendship which induced this popular actress to emerge from her retirement, has thus, fortunately for the younger generation of playgoers, broadened into a kindly consideration of the claims of the general public, and a due sense of the boon conferred was gratefully conveyed in that fervent greeting which welcomed her reappearance on Saturday. As the fascinating heroine of Mr. Maddison Morton's highly diverting farce of *Betsy Baker*, the admirable finish of her style, the thorough truthfulness of her acting, and the wonderful expression of her features received once more the keenest appreciation, whilst no evidence of diminished power was in any respect perceptible. The intense gratification which Mrs. Keeley afforded the audience should be considered a strong reason for an extension of the privilege to those unable on that particular occasion to share in the enjoyment of one of those rare histrionic treats long cherished in the memory. Stimulated by the presence of such an accomplished mistress of her art, Mr. J. L. Toole acted 'Marmaduke Mouser' in his best manner, and he was excellently supported by Mr. R. Soutar as 'Crummy,' and Miss Rose

Coghlan as 'Mrs. Mouser.' On Saturday next Mr. Santley appears as 'Tom Tug,' in *The Waterman*, whilst all admirers of one of the most finished artists adorning the modern stage will be glad to learn that Mr. Alfred Wigan will appear at these dramatic *matinées* on Saturday, April 8th, in that famous impersonation which has given such enduring popularity to the comedy of *The First Night*."

The entertainments were entirely changed at Easter to keep the contract for Mr. Santley's return.

He made his reappearance in Auber's *Fra Diavolo* (his "Zerlina," this time, being Miss Blanche Cole), pending the production of Lortzing's celebrated German opera, *Czar und Zimmermann*, done into English under the title of *Peter the Shipwright*. Easter could not be allowed to pass without a new mixture of burlesque and opera-bouffe, although Miss Farren had gone to the country, and a piece called *Malala*, a *pasticcio* as regards music, and a translation of *Fleur de Thé* as regards dialogue, was produced. Miss Selina Dolaro was engaged to strengthen the musical cast, her companions being Mr. Aynsley Cook, Mr. Stoyle, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Miss L. Wilson, Miss Rose Coghlan, and Miss Constance Loseby. The performances commenced, as usual, with a comic ballet. The Paynes (Mr. W. H. Payne, Mr. F. Payne, Mr. Harry Payne, and Madame Esta, pantomimists) were engaged for the *matinées*, so I had a double dancing company.

The production of *Peter the Shipwright* took place on Saturday, April 15th, 1871.

The *Daily Telegraph* of April 17th, 1871, had these few remarks :—

"According to announcement, Albert Lortzing's *Czar und Zimmerman* was produced at this house on Saturday, under the title of *Peter the Shipwright*, and with Mr. Santley in the principal character. We can do no more now than announce a complete success, reserving till to-morrow the fuller notice which a work so interesting and a performance so excellent have a right to demand."

No pains had been spared to give the opera a proper setting. I had not the advantage of Alfred Thompson's artistic taste and assistance, so I ransacked Holland myself for models of old Dutch costumes, trinkets, and furniture of the period.

On the 18th of April, 1871, a very long and appreciative notice of the opera appeared in the same journal, from which I make the following short extract :—

"When Mr. Hollingshead announced the production of Lortzing's *Czar und Zimmermann*, it is probable that a large majority of those who take but a passing interest in musical matters heard of it and of Lortzing for the first time. The fact shows what need has existed for a theatre devoted, like the Gaiety, to the performance of opera not adapted to, or lying outside, the range of our great lyric houses. For thirty-four years the work intro-

duced on Saturday evening, under the name of *Peter the Shipwright*, has been, more or less, a stock piece in Germany, along with many another equally worthy of notice, and equally unknown here. During all that time English managers have ignored its existence, though the very fact of its being a representative and accepted German comic opera should have won attention, apart from considerations of musical worth. Neglect like this has done injustice to Lortzing, whose talent is, at least, as worthy of honour as the accomplishments which bring M. Offenbach substantial reward. In a certain way Lortzing was no ordinary man. He wrote the books of his own operas, composed the music, took part as a vocalist in the performances, and united to this threefold occupation the cares of a manager. Admirable Crichtons are scarce, and it is more than probable that he failed to excel in every department; but, at any rate, the clever Berliner stands, as an operatic composer, in advance of men better known. Kreutzer, Lindpaintner, and Reissiger may have surpassed him in general musical culture, and have gained more extensive credit. Against the one remembered opera of each, however, must be set, in addition to the *Czar und Zimmermann*, *Der Pole und sein Kind*, *Die beiden Schützer*, *Undine*, and *Der Waffenschmied*, works which have secured for Lortzing a substantial reputation, in the romantic as well as in the comic school, and are now almost as popular as they ever were. By right of its parentage, therefore, not to

speak of its worth, *Peter the Shipwright*, at the Gaiety, has a *raison d'être* few will dispute."

The press notices were uniformly favourable—some enthusiastic—and the *London Figaro*, a very independent organ, said: "Mr. John Hollingshead continues to improve the tone of the Gaiety Theatre. The production of Lortzing's *Czar und Zimmermann* marks a determination to secure for this excellently managed and most comfortable theatre a character which shall put it far above the merely frivolous spectacular and burlesque houses." This praise was hardly in accordance with facts. The Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales's Theatre had not taken courage to do without *Don Giovanni* by Henry J. Byron, a burlesque in which Mr. John Hare played "Zerlina" in petticoats, forming an "after-piece" for Robertson's *Caste*, one of the standard living plays of the last half-century, and the Gaiety ushered in *Peter the Shipwright* with an English version of Offenbach's *Deux Aveugles*, and bowed it out with the pasticcio opera-bouffe of *Malala*. Mr. Charles Santley made a great success in the title part of the opera, and he was well supported by Mr. Aynsley Cook, Mr. Gayner, Mr. Lyall, Mr. Fox, Mr. Furneaux Cook, Miss Blanche Cole, Miss Tremaine, and others.

The Gaiety panorama kept moving. *Peter the Shipwright* was replaced by a little-known opera of Balfe's, called (by us) *Letty the Basket-Maker*. I introduced it (June 14th, 1871), with the following note in the programme: "This opera is called

'new' because the late Mr. Balfe re-arranged it, adding several pieces of music which have never been performed, and the author of the libretto has re-edited it. For the rest, the story is very old and very popular. The germ of it may be found in Sir Philip's Sydney's *Arcadia*; it formed the subject of a drama by Thomas Jevon, called *The Devil of a Wife*, which was played at the Dorset Garden Theatre about 1680, and this drama was afterwards transformed into a ballad opera by C. Coffey, and produced at Drury Lane Theatre, under the title of *The Devil to Pay*, in 1731. Coffey's opera contained songs by Colley Cibber and Lord Rochester, and it first brought the celebrated actress, Mrs. Clive, into prominent notice. The old drama has also furnished the plots for several modern plays, ballets, and burlesques." Miss Julia Matthews, Miss Constance Loseby, Mr. Lyall, Mr. Aynsley Cook, Mr. Furneaux Cook, Mr. Gayner, and Miss Tremaine formed the cast. The opera was preceded by the farce of *The Young Widow*, and followed by Gilbert's burlesque of *Robert the Devil*, with Miss Farren in her original part.

On July 1st, 1871, I tried, for the first time, a French company. I imported the company of the *Fantaisies Parisiennes* from Brussels, who played in that city at the *Alcazar*—a "smoking theatre," the first ever furnished with a sliding-roof. M. Humbert, the director, was a liberal and energetic manager, and he ultimately produced for the first time Lecocq's *La Fille de Madame Angot*. His

JULIA MATTHEWS

company was excellent—Mdlle. Paola Marie, Mdlle. Clary, M. Mario Widmer, M. Ed. Georges, M. Jolly, M. Ginet, Mdlle. Gentien, M. Charlier, Mdlle. Delorme, and many others. Their repertory was most extensive, and they often changed their bill three times a week. It was my first French season, in the never-to-be-forgotten year of the Paris Commune.

July 30th, 1871, a "legitimate" season set in of four weeks, under the practical direction of Mr. Walter Montgomery. He was a more than passable "Romeo," and an excellent "Hamlet." Mr. Walter Montgomery had not the nerve required for responsible management, and he was further burdened with private troubles. He committed suicide at the close of August.

On August 28th Miss Julia Matthews, and what I may call my opera-bouffe company, returned to the Gaiety with *The Grand Duchess*, preceded by an operetta, and followed by a ballet in which the Payne family appeared. Mr. W. H. Payne had the reputation of being the best English pantomimist of his time. In about a fortnight Dr. Westland Marston's charming comedy *Donna Diana*, in which Miss Ada Cavendish made her first appearance at the Gaiety, was produced as a first piece, Mr. William Rignold being engaged to support her. This was soon followed by the comedy of *The Serious Family* (also a first piece), played by the same company, Mr. Stoyle representing "Aminidab Sleek."

The first new production (*The Serious Family* being retained as a first piece, with its almost distinct company) was a comic opera by M. Emile Jonas, a Parisian composer, whose *Two Harlequins* had formed the first little piece at the opening of the theatre in 1868, and whose more ambitious works had been heard in French during the short stay of M. Humbert's Brussels opera-bouffe company. M. Offenbach and M. Hervé gave the theatre no trouble; the first was a *poco-curante* invalid, and the second was a quiet French gentleman; but M. Emile Jonas was more excitable, and while Herr Lutz was conducting the band in a competent though undemonstrative way, M. Jonas ran from one end of the orchestra to the other and back again, with his hands sliding along the rail dividing the stalls from the instrumentalists, looking and acting very much like Gough the temperance advocate during one of his (studied ?) fits of excitement at Exeter Hall. Many of the musicians resented this interference, and at last the principal drummer struck. Throwing down his "sticks," and using a word which, according to Bailey's Old English Dictionary, is "a term of endearment, common amongst sailors," he shouted out (alluding to Lutz and Jonas), "One B—— at a time!"

Jonas's opera, put into English by Alfred Thompson, under the title of *Cinderella the Younger*, and furnished with the artist-adapter's graceful dresses, was an artistic and musical success. It introduced, as a member of the Gaiety company, playing in

English, Mdlle. Clary, the young *prima donna* of the Brussels troupe. Before long, the first piece, *The Serious Family*, was replaced by a new adaptation by Mr. C. S. Cheltnam, called *The Matchmaker*, in which Miss Ada Cavendish and Miss Florence Farren were the chief ladies.

As *The Matchmaker* superseded the other comedy, so Offenbach's *Belle Hélène* superseded Jonas's *Cinderella the Younger*. Miss Julia Matthews played the title part, and "Paris" and "Orestes" were represented by Miss Constance Loseby and Miss Tremaine.

On November 4th, 1871, I made another raid upon the old drama, and produced a deodorised version, corrected with Condy's Fluid by way of ink, of Congreve's *Love for Love*. I put the following explanatory note in the programme :—

"*Love for Love*, the third comedy written by William Congreve, was originally produced on April 30th, 1695, at the opening of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, a house built by the author, Betterton, Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Bracegirdle, on the site of the Duke's Theatre, in Portugal Row, a locality chiefly known of late years in connection with the Insolvent Debtors' Court. The original cast of characters stood thus: 'Valentine,' Betterton; 'Ben,' Doggett; 'Foresight,' Sandford; 'Tattle,' Boman; 'Sir Sampson,' Underhill; 'Scandal,' Smith; 'Jeremy,' Bowen; 'Trapland,' Trefusis; 'Angelica,' Mrs. Bracegirdle; 'Mrs. Frail,' Mrs. Barry; 'Miss Prue,' Mrs.

Ayliff; 'Mrs. Foresight,' Mrs. Bowman; and the 'Nurse,' Mrs. Leigh. The comedy was so successful for those days—being performed thirteen times in succession—that Betterton and his brother managers offered the author a whole share in their profits on the sole condition of furnishing them annually with a new play.

"*Love for Love* contains more witty dialogue and variety of character than any of its author's other works, and as Congreve confessedly stands before Vanbrugh, Wycherley, and Farquhar, it may be taken as the best representative work of its period—a period exceedingly rich in English comedy. Much of the 'wit' I have, of course, been compelled to cut out, not in deference to the wishes of the Lord Chamberlain, who claims no control over the masterpieces of English dramatic literature, but to satisfy my own sense of decency. Some portion of the dialogue I have also sacrificed, to bring the comedy within the limits of an ordinary acting modern play; but there are many people—thankful for small mercies—who will perhaps accept even a mangled version of Congreve in preference to no Congreve at all. Though the construction of *Love for Love* is a little old-fashioned, I have done nothing to it beyond reducing the original five acts to three—treating it with more 'reverence' than I was compelled to bestow upon Sir John Vanbrugh's *Relapse*—produced at the Gaiety Theatre, April, 1870, under the title of *The Man of Quality*.

"The character of 'Ben' in *Love for Love* is inter-

esting as being the first sketch of a British sailor on the English stage—and it is curious to notice that he is not invested with any of that nobleness and generosity so common in his dramatic successors. His first representative, oddly enough, was Mr. Doggett, the actor who is now chiefly remembered by his legacy of a coat and badge, which is annually rowed for on the river Thames, from London Bridge to Chelsea, by six young watermen. This is a perpetual compliment paid to George I. by the actor. The character of 'Miss Prue' is interesting as being the original of a long line of stage 'hoydens'; and 'Old Foresight,' though generally considered an obsolete sketch, because he believes in astrology, which has gone out of fashion, is not obsolete as a representative of superstition. The play, though it has had a long rest, has been performed at various times and places during the last two centuries, and notably at Vanbrugh's Theatre in the Haymarket—the predecessor of the Opera House—by a company of women in 1705."

Miss Ada Cavendish represented "Angelica," and Miss Farren, as a matter of course, "Miss Prue," Mr. Stoyle being "Ben, the Sailor." The performance was not perfect, judged from the artificial comedy point of view—the old manner being lost, but on the whole it was a fair specimen of what I call the Wardour Street Drama. The treacle for the early English pill was provided by *La Belle Hélène.* The Gaiety bill in those days equalled in length the programme of the Théâtre Français,

while in variety it combined the Gymnase or the Vaudeville and the Bouffes in Paris.

After a few nights of Mr. J. L. Toole, who came to Town on a flying visit at the end of November, 1871, and changed his bill every night (more work!), Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault gave a few special performances. This was their reappearance on the London stage, after an absence of four years. The pieces represented were *Night and Morning*, *La Joie Fait Peur*, translated into stage Irish. Boucicault's "Old Kerry" was admirable. This piece was supplemented by the *Belle Hélène*, and the comic drama *To Parents and Guardians*. Mdlle. Clary played the French girl "Virginie." By this time, what with changes of the bill at night, and three or four *matinées* each week, the theatre had very properly got the name of "The Treading Mill." I think I baptized it myself. During this short engagement of sixteen nights, a new romantic drama by Mr. Boucicault was produced, called *Elfie*, in which Mrs. Boucicault was supported by (amongst others) Mr. Henry Neville, Mr. Atkins, and Mr. G. F. Neville. Mr. William Rignold distinguished himself by playing a blind sailor.

Mr. Toole returned again, December 18th, 1871, appearing in some of the old pieces while the operatic extravaganza of *Thespis* was being rehearsed. In this piece Mr. W. S. Gilbert, the author, and Mr. Arthur Sullivan (now Sir Arthur), the composer, were brought together and collaborated for the first time. *Thespis* was in two acts,

W. S. GILBERT
JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD

ROBERT SOUTAR
REHEARSAL OF THESPIS

and was produced December 26th, 1871. The union of Gilbert and Sullivan has produced so much for the delight of the public, and the honour and profit of the writer and musician, that *Thespis* has an interest above and beyond its intrinsic merits. The various notices of the piece were not very far-seeing, but critics are not paid to act as prophets, supposing they are gifted with the necessary faculty. The following extract from the *Standard*, December 27th, 1871, probably written by Mr. Alfred Watson, may be quoted :—

"There is no theatre in London where the kind of entertainment provided is more in accordance with the characteristic title of the house than at the Gaiety. Melancholy tragedies, dreary farces, and long operas are alike eschewed as unsuitable to the genius of the *locale*, and give place to comedy-dramas, operettas, extravaganzas, and ballets. Even at this season of the year, the able director, Mr. John Hollingshead, contrives to preserve a speciality for his theatre, and instead of following in the wake of the larger houses, and adding to the number of pantomimes performed, or electing to produce a pasticcio, which, however well selected are its ingredients, must be wanting in the very element of beauty, viz., unity of design, he has judiciously called on Mr. W. S. Gilbert to furnish him with an original opera-extravaganza, and intrusted its musical setting to Mr. Arthur Sullivan. From the association of these two names the most pleasing result has for some weeks past been anticipated, which the success of

last evening fully justified. It was with an operatic extravaganza by Mr. W. S. Gilbert that, just three years ago, the Gaiety opened its doors to the public and inaugurated a new *régime* in theatrical management which has borne good fruit. Independent, therefore, of his talents as a clever writer, delightful versifier, and humorist, Mr. W. S. Gilbert has had the advantage of acquainting himself with the tastes of the bulk of the Gaiety supporters, and of shaping his pieces to suit the character of the house and the company which Mr. John Hollingshead so adroitly keeps in such good working order—advantages of which it is evident he has fully availed himself. We are not aware that Dr. Arthur Sullivan has previously written anything for the Gaiety, but by his musical setting of *Box and Cox*, and by his opera *Contrabandista* (produced some years ago at St. George's Theatre during Mr. German Reed's short tenancy), he has shown how well suited are his talents for illustrating subjects demanding a fanciful conception, melodious strain and humorous expression, together with skill in orchestral colouring and able musicianship. Mr. Gilbert in *Thespis* has happily provided the composer with everything he could desire, mastering the character of opera-extravaganza, which precludes the exercise of the highest flights of genius of which a musician is capable, and sets a limit to the exercise of his talents. The composer in return has wedded Mr. Gilbert's verses to some exquisite music, has pleasingly coloured his scenes, and given a character to

some of his mythological personages which relieves them from the complaint too often urged against such of being mere puppets—unsympathising creations of a poet's fancy. Of course, Mr. Gilbert never once intends to be serious throughout the operetta, for he carries his extravagances to the utmost limits allowed a Christmas purveyor of absurdities, but a clever composer rarely fails in finding occasions for the introduction of the pathetic, and Mr. Arthur Sullivan has been very happy in infusing a certain amount of sentiment into several of the characters, which creates for them an interest little imagined by those who merely peruse the incidents of the plot. Perhaps the clever author of *Thespis; or, The Gods Grown Old*, has revealed to his able collaborateur the allegory which lies concealed in his story, and so has been enabled to inspire his muse to a higher flight than it would appear to the uninitiated to justify."

Thespis was preceded by H. J. Byron's drama, *Dearer than Life*, in which Mr. Toole represented his original character of "Michael Garner," and Miss Ada Cavendish played "Lucy Garner."

English and French comic opera having been tried, it was time to give similar work "made in Germany" a chance. F. von Suppée's operetta, *The Beautiful Galatea*, was produced at one of the Gaiety *matinées*, in January, 1872, with such success that it was transferred to the night bill, taking, with *Off the Line*, the place of *Dearer than Life*, *Thespis* still keeping its place in the kaleidoscopic programme.

The story of Suppée's operetta, oddly enough, is the same as W. S. Gilbert's Haymarket comedy, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, although the author never saw the German piece. It is also the same story as the Massé operetta, *Galathée*—part of the standard repertory of the Paris Opéra Comique.

The Ash-Wednesday restrictions in force at this time compelled me to take off the regular entertainments of the evening. To show the absurdity of this restriction, I opened the theatre with a music hall programme :—

The Entr'acte, February 17th, 1872:—

"THE GAIETY.

"On Ash-Wednesday, the above theatre having to close its doors against regular theatrical performances, availed itself of the abilities of miscellaneous artistes, whose songs and dances were considered not 'exactly the thing' for music halls on a fast day. In fact, they had 'no work to do' in those wicked places, and favoured with their presence the more orthodox audiences of the places 'licensed by the Lord Chamberlain.' After a well-played overture, Mr. W. Randall sang a temperance song, and if anything could remind one of the celebrated Stiggins, this would. His make-up is perfect, while his facial expression in the character was to the life. But then Mr. Randall is an actor as well as comic singer, and that is saying a good deal now-a-days. Orkins and Bell gave what they called a *comic* negro

scene; although the latter part seemed to approach very nearly to reality, so well was it done. Their spade dance is the best part of their performance, and pleased the audience much. It appears that although a human clown is debarred from performing on Ash Wednesday, the embargo does not apply to the lower animals, for here we had the celebrated clown dog, who went through his antics in conjunction with the other trained dogs associated with the name of Mr. Etherton. Their performance is exceedingly clever, and so thought the audience, especially the more juvenile part of it. Lieutenant Cole's performace is suitable everywhere, and perhaps in no place could this gentleman have been heard to better advantage than in Mr. Hollingshead's pretty theatre. At any rate the applause was so loud and genuine that Mr. Cole must have been highly gratified. Mr. J. G. Forde related a humorous story, which perhaps was quite new to the Gaiety, but we distinctly recollect having heard it before, somewhere. It gained immense applause, and Mr. Forde was compelled to 'oblige again.' After a song by Miss Jolly, we came to what we consider the mistake of the evening. Mrs. Billington read the story of 'Sykes and Nancy,' and for forty minutes most of the audience were in a state of fidget. Although Mrs. Billington is a clever actress, she is not equal to reading this dismal tragedy. To say the least, it was out of place, and only wearied the audience. Miss Constance Loseby sang the 'Jodl' song from *La Belle Hélène*, with

very great gusto, and on being encored gave 'Sally in our Alley,' still a favourite song with all. If 'Jolly Nash' can't make one laugh, who can? His song about the Polytechnic is irresistibly funny. 'Courting in the Rain' with pretty Amy Horton is not at all a bad idea, and this young lady, who always dresses with such exquisite taste, gained hosts of admirers, both by her singing of the above song and a 'Prince' medley. Those inimitable duettists, Ryley and Barnum, gave their celebrated 'Quaker' view of the 'Can-Can.' Here, as elsewhere, they took the lead, and after their dance, the audience were quite uproarious for an encore. Time, however, would not allow this, and Mr. Bevan concluded the evening's entertainment with a very clever performance with some wooden figures. The management, especially in connection with those artistes engaged usually in music halls, was in the hands of Mr. A. Maynard, of the York Road, and with the exception of the non-appearance of the Gelubckes, there was no hitch in the programme."

A significant comment on the above is the following paragraph:—

Observer, February 17th, 1872:—

"Mr. J. L. Toole having enjoyed his Ash Wednesday rest by running down to Nottingham, there to delight the mid-country folks with his *Paul Pry* and 'Simmons' in *The Spitalfields Weaver*, returned of course to his duties on Thursday evening."

CHAPTER V

The Literary Drama

ON April 1st, 1872, literature and the drama were once more united, and a more than usual literary character was given to the theatre by the production of a new three-act comedy by Charles Reade, called *Shilly-Shally*, founded on a novel by Anthony Trollope called *Ralph the Heir*. This comedy provided good character parts for Mr. Toole and Miss Farren. The *Daily Telegraph* thus describes it (April 2nd, 1872) :—

"In the bustling, good-natured, vulgar, and irrepressible tailor, 'Neefit,' Mr. Toole finds a part in which he thoroughly revels. His fussiness over the Twickenham dinner-party, his constant bursts of vulgarity, and his comic quarrel with his good little daughter, were in this favourite actor's very best vein. The line spoken to 'Polly,' as only Mr. Toole could speak it, 'Did you ever hear of a little article called a father's cuss?' literally brought down the house, and made the audience rock with delight. Miss E. Farren was equally at home as 'Polly Neefit'—natural, spontaneous, and delightfully funny. This clever little lady played 'Polly'

to a nicety. 'Clarissa Underwood'—another 'Lily Dale,' and very prominent in Mr. Trollope's long gallery of sweet and charming girls—is not allowed by dramatic exigencies to be quite the Clarissa of the novel. But the character is nicely sketched by Miss Florence Farren, who made a capital point at the unbosoming of her secret to her old father. This was a very pretty specimen of acting. The two young men were fairly played by Mr. Sydney Dyneley and Mr. Temple, and 'Moggs'—well made up but rather jerkily acted—by Mr. W. Rignold. Mr. Maclean and Mr. Taylor were as useful as ever in small characters. A loud call for the author brought Mr. Soutar in front of the curtain, who announced that Mr. Trollope was in Australia, but that the stage manager was deputed to return thanks for both authors for the enthusiastic reception given to their 'unpretending little comedy.'"

Harmless and successful as this piece appeared to be (it was supported by two other pieces—the *Deux Aveugles* of Offenbach, and *Aladdin the Second*), it gave rise to much adverse criticism, much letter-writing and even leader-writing, and eventually a lawsuit, brought by Charles Reade against the *Morning Advertiser*, in which he gained a verdict for £200 and costs. Anthony Trollope disclaimed having given proper permission to adapt (though no such permission is, or was, required under our clumsy copyright laws), and generally there was much friction all round. One or two lines in the dialogue were probably open to mis-

conception, but I declined to be dragged into the controversy.

The following extract from the *Saturday Review* (Feb. 22nd, 1873) explained the position as it stood several months after the piece had run its brief Gaiety course :—

"There has been another recent trial, in which a performance at the Gaiety Theatre was the subject of discussion, and some remarks which we made upon it have produced a letter from Mr. John Hollingshead, the manager, of which the material part is as follows :—

'As long as the Government burdens me with a Lord Chamberlain, I must decline to take any moral responsibility in connection with the plays produced at my theatre. I paid two guineas, the official fee, to the Official Censor of plays for his official certificate of purity as regards *Shilly-Shally*.'

It is a comfort to be able to lay the blame, if there be any, for the language of this play upon so broad a back as that of the Lord Chamberlain. It is possible that the Official Censor may not be quite as keenly alive to the possibility of words being taken in a double sense as are some frequenters of theatres. It is possible, also, that words which on paper look harmless may be made disagreeably significant by the manner of their delivery. It was said that the Lord Chamberlain entertained the idea of prohibiting *Nos Intimes*, but, being persuaded to go and see it himself, he found nothing but the strictest propriety in the performance. It was also said that the actors were aware that the Lord Chamberlain

was coming. We should have thought that the Official Censor was intended as a protection to the public, but that the public had still the right of taking care, to the best of their power, of themselves. However, division of labour is the secret of effective work. The manager does his business, and expects the Official Censor to do his. Morality is not in the managerial department."

I am not afraid to quote a "nasty" paragraph, even against myself. The journalist and the pugilist are half-brothers, and take their "punishment" cheerfully.

In the *Daily Telegraph*, February 13th, 1873, I wrote the following, in justice to Mr. Clement Scott:—

"'SHILLY-SHALLY.'

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'DAILY TELEGRAPH.'

"SIR,—

"As Mr. Clement Scott's name has been prominently mentioned in the report of the case 'Reade *v.* the *Morning Advertiser*,' allow me, in justice to Mr. Scott, to say that the only piece of his ever played at the Gaiety Theatre has been a little adaptation from the French; to which his name, by his own desire, was never attached. Let me further state that he had no pecuniary interest in the 'run' of this piece, and that he knew when it was taken out of the bills to make room for *Shilly-Shally*, it would, in accordance with the system of the theatre,

be revived again and again as part of our successful repertory.

"I am, sir, yours, etc.,

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

"GAIETY THEATRE,

"*February 11th.*"

The *Spectator* of February 15th, 1873, had the following sensible remarks :—

"Mr. Charles Reade is a great deal too sensitive. He recently produced a drama called *Shilly-Shally*, founded on Mr. Trollope's novel, *Ralph the Heir*; and as there are vulgar people in it, he makes them use vulgar sayings. None of them, as reported, are really gross, though of course an actor can make anything gross he pleases; but Mr. Lee, a critic on the *Advertiser*, was extremely shocked, chiefly, it would seem, at one of the oldest proverbs in the language, 'He must marry her in her smock.' He accordingly called the play indecent, and Mr. Reade, who has rather a mania on the subject of 'prurient prudes,' suspects 'combinations' against him, and does not understand the genuine Philistine, brought an action for libel. The jury gave him a verdict, which was right, and £200, which was a good deal too much, as, after all, critics ought to be allowed to be over-nice and squeamish, if they like. That is a failure of the intellect rather than an offence. A member of the Croydon School Board the other day denounced a proposal for hanging up the Commandments in the schoolrooms, on the ground that

the Seventh was so improper and suggested such bad ideas. Would Mr. Reade, in Mr. Spottiswoode's place, have indicted him for libel, or have let him alone, as a man too stupid to be worth notice?"

May 4th, 1872, Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault returned, according to contract, and ran through some of their most popular pieces—the *Colleen Bawn*, *Arragh-na-Pogue*, and others. Mr. Shiel Barry joined the company. A condensed version of Colman's *John Bull* was produced, with Mr. Boucicault as "Dennis Bulgrudery," and Mr. W. Rignold as "Job Thornberry." Miss Lydia Foote, Mrs. Billington, and Mr. Dan Leeson strengthened the cast. *Arragh-na-Pogue* was the afterpiece—comedy and drama in one evening.

The Boucicaults sailed for America early in August, 1872, and Mr. Toole, and the regular Gaiety company, returned from the provinces and the suburbs. His opening programme (Aug. 19th) was *Paul Pry* and the *Princess of Trebizonde.*

A new drama on old lines was produced, called *Good News*, by Henry J. Byron, in which Miss Fanny Brough joined the company. *Good News* was not a strong play, and it was speedily backed up with a burlesque by Mr. Reece, on the evergreen subject of the *Forty Thieves.* Mr. Toole was, of course, the "Ali Baba," Miss Farren "Ganem," Miss Loseby "Morgiana," and Miss Tremaine "Hassarac." "Cassim" and "Cogia" were represented by Mr. J. G. Taylor and Mrs. H. Leigh.

Everything was changed on October 7th, 1872,

DION BOUCICAULT

when Charles Mathews made his first appearance at the Gaiety after his tour round the world.

His reappearance is thus described in the *Standard*, October 8th, 1872 :—

"Among the throng of playgoers who assembled at this theatre last night to welcome back our representative comedian, there were probably but few who were not touched at the enthusiastic outbreak of applause, prolonged for some minutes, which greeted Mr. Charles Mathews upon his return to London after his travels. When we remember the enormous concourse of folks who bade him 'farewell and God-speed' at the big house in Covent Garden, this tumultuous reception is not so surprising. But of all the persons in the Gaiety Theatre Mr. Charles Mathews was undoubtedly the least moved. Here was the old smile, the never-changing nonchalance of manner, the same inflexible impudence, the unalterable ease of carriage, and—the same juvenility which may have charmed the playgoers of twenty years past or more. It was in no new *rôle* that Mr. Mathews appeared last night—few of his assumptions being better known than those of 'Twiggleton' in *A Curious Case*, and the dual performances of 'Sir Fretful 'Plagiary' and 'Puff' in Sheridan's *Critic*. How *the* actor carried the fortunes of the night, it is needless to relate; the walls of the theatre must even now be vibrating with the uproarious welcome poured forth from English hearts to our foremost English comedian. Mr. Charles Mathews will

prove as successful at the Gaiety as at any other theatre. No higher compliment could be paid the actor, while he is assured, at Mr. Hollingshead's establishment, of the most complete support, in every way, that he could desire. The present bill will remain in force during the present week. The next novelty will be the comedy of *Used Up*, still to be played in conjunction with *The Critic*. What better fare could any one seek who is desirous of an evening's sound amusement? The cast in each play was efficiently represented by members of the Gaiety company."

The particulars of this engagement, and his further engagements, were thus described by me some years ago in one of the public journals :—

Mr. Charles Mathews, like his new manager, had a sneaking kindness for publicity and "writing to the papers":—

Daily Telegraph, October 17th, 1872 :—

"A CARD FROM MR. CHARLES MATHEWS.

"TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE DAILY TELEGRAPH.'

"SIR,—

"Will you oblige me by giving publicity to the following note, which explains itself?

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"GAIETY THEATRE, *October 15th.*"

"'Mr. Charles Mathews presents his compliments to the whole human race, and begs to state that, much as he loves his fellow-creatures, he finds it impossible to provide for the necessities of even the small population of London alone. The enormous number of applications for assistance he daily receives, chiefly from total strangers, makes it necessary for him to apologise for not entirely supporting the applicants and their families; and it is with shame he is obliged to confess himself unable to accomplish so desirable an object. He has had quite enough to do to fight through his own difficulties, and has been, and is still, labouring at a time of life when many men would be glad to be sitting quietly by their firesides, in the hope of acquiring a small independence for his old age, which endeavour would be completely frustrated were he to devote all his hard-earned savings to the necessities of others. He hereby declares, upon his oath, that though he has lately travelled thousands of miles, and met with all the success he could wish, and is at the present moment basking in the sunshine of public favour, he is not a millionaire; and though warmly attached to his species in the plural, he has at last learnt to value it in the singular—his specie having become equally dear to him. It is not that he 'loves Cæsar less, but that he loves Rome more.' He admits the force of the old quotation, *Haud ignara mala miseris succurrere disco,* but he offers this new translation: 'Having so long suffered distress of

his own, he has learnt, though rather late, to feel for the necessities of the one who is most in want of assistance, namely, himself!'"

December, 1872, was famous in dramatic annals for the great strike of the London gas men. Fortunately Charles Mathews, with a small company and no burlesque, could perform under the lighting conditions which were unavoidable at the beginning of the century; but for two nights the theatres, especially the central ones, were largely illuminated with borrowed oil-lamps. The *Morning Post*, December 5th, 1872, gave the following description of the difficulty:—

"At many of the theatres the contrivances of the previous evening were again employed so as to give the principal share of gas-light to the stage, and candles, moderators, paraffin, benzoline, and naphtha lamps were extensively brought into use for this purpose. Nevertheless, the report from the theatres was universally that the gas was better than on the previous night. St. James's Theatre, which had been compelled to close on Tuesday evening for want of light, had an abundant supply last night. The Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, being supplied by a company whose men have not struck, has been of course in no way inconvenienced, save by the fears of the public that it might be closed for want of light. The management of the Gaiety Theatre carried out the brilliant idea of illuminating the Strand from St. Mary's Church, westward, by means of a lime light on the top of the theatre,

which proved very effective. Mr. Gardner, the lamp manufacturer close to Charing Cross, carried out a similar device, so that each end of the Strand was brilliantly lighted up during a considerable portion of the evening."

Fortunately the "strike" was soon over. Electricity was not introduced as a general lighting agent till six years afterwards, and introduced then at the Gaiety Theatre.

As I never lost an opportunity of "writing to the papers" (it was part of my system of advertising), I sent the following to the *Standard*, where it appeared December 6th, 1872 :—

"THE GAS MUDDLE.

"TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE STANDARD.'

"SIR,—

"As a ratepayer paying over one thousand a year, may I ask why in the present hour of unlighted or half-lighted streets, it is left to me, and people like me, to illuminate the Queen's highway by electricity? Vestries (if such bodies exist for any other purpose than to impose taxes) could surely borrow batteries from the Royal Institution, and light a mile of leading thoroughfare at the cost of about £1 an hour. It is too much to expect the Imperial Government to look into these petty parochial details, especially as the Prime Minister is just now much interested in the Mosaic Account of the Deluge, but the same authorities who manage

Leicester Square so admirably ought easily to grapple with this lighting difficulty.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

"GAIETY THEATRE, *December 5th.*"

Mr. Charles Mathews closed his first engagement with the following speech :—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—It is so long that I have been deprived of the pleasure of addressing you that I have not been willing to forego the privilege of saying a few words on the last night of my present engagement. I have a thousand things I should like to tell you, but it would take too long. ('No, no.') Since we parted I have played before the gold diggers of Australia, the diamond miners of California, the buffalo hunters of the Far West, and the cannibals of the Sandwich Islands. (Laughter.) At the latter place I played one night by command, and in the presence of His Majesty Kame-hame-ha, King of the Sandwich Islands (not Hoky Poky Wonky Fong, as erroneously reported), a sable potentate weighing about seventeen stone, before a black and brown multitude till lately cannibals, who showed their white teeth, grinning and enjoying *Patter versus Clatter* as much as a few years ago they would have enjoyed the roasting of a missionary or the baking of a baby. (Immense laughter.) And, after all these feats, here I am once more, safe and sound, in our old jog-trot world, or, as I believe it is the right thing to say, 'on my native heath.' (Cheers.)

But I must confine myself at present to the expression of my cordial thanks for the brilliant attendance I have been favoured with night after night for the last ten weeks, and the warm and friendly reception I have experienced. It is worth a trip round the world to be honoured by so hearty a welcome on one's return. (Cheers.) I have been three years away from England—time enough to have been easily forgotten—and it is gratifying to find that I am still remembered, and, what is better, still capable of eliciting the same old tokens of approbation from the public. Were that public the same that witnessed my first appearance on the stage, I might attribute their applause to their kindly feelings of old association, and conclude that they looked upon my present efforts favourably in consideration of our long acquaintanceship. But it is no longer the same public; another generation has sprung up since I made my *début*, and it is, therefore, most agreeable to me to believe that any amusement the more youthful portion of the audience may derive from my personations is afforded by my present powers, and not caused by the revival of old associations. (Hear, hear.) To find myself within a stone's-throw of seventy years of age, permitted still to assume characters of twenty-five, and tolerated in the same lively parts I played nearly forty years ago, I consider not only a great compliment to myself individually, but to the vitality of the comedies it has been my aim to interpret. (Great cheering.) In this age of

sensation it is consoling to find that these slight pieces are still attractive, in spite of the total absence of scenic effects, break-downs, topical songs, or a display of legs. (Laughter.) When I see fashionable young swells and elegant girls of the period sitting quietly and attentively for three hours enjoying a hearty laugh, I confess I feel flattered. (Hear, hear.) With my own contemporaries, many of whom, I am happy to see, are still faithful adherents, it is a different thing. We have grown old together, and look with mutual indulgence at our respective bald heads, but my new and younger friends have no such considerations, and are swayed only by their present impressions, and not influenced by kindly recollections. They look upon me, I hope, as a living reality, and not merely as a curious old fossil dug up from some Chaldean ruin; while my earlier acquaintances are able, I trust, to say, 'There is life in the old horse still.' (Cheers.) I will only add, ladies and gentlemen, that as long as I continue to afford you amusement, so long will I endeavour to promote it; but I promise you that the moment I feel conscious of decay I will at once retire from the stage, and will not inflict upon you the melancholy spectacle of a light comedian upon crutches. This is a purely egotistical speech, I am aware; but I couldn't help it—I drifted into it without premeditation; and, as I have for so many years been in the habit of telling you all my joys and sorrows, I have merely resumed my old gossiping practice. I have chosen this occa-

sion to express to you my sincere gratitude for the brilliant engagement I have just concluded. Allow me, therefore, ladies and gentlemen, to thank you a thousand times for your many kindnesses, and to say *au revoir*."

The occupiers of pit, stalls, and boxes here stood up, and Mr. Mathews retired with thunders of applause, cheering, and waving of handkerchiefs.

Mr. Toole returned with some of the wandering members of the company who had not been required during Mr. Charles Mathews' engagement. Charles Mathews' wants in the way of company were very few. Mr. Toole appeared December 16th, 1872, in *Good News* (Byron's drama), and *Ali Baba* (Reece's burlesque). On Boxing Night a version of Charles Dickens's *Chimes*, called *Trotty Veck*, prepared by Mrs. Charles Calvert, with Mr. Toole in the principal part, was played. "Will Fern" was admirably represented by Mr. A. E. Bishop.

The morning performances now included a short harlequinade, tacked on to the burlesque of *Ali Baba*. Offenbach's *Magic Fife* (*La Flute Enchantée*), and an adaptation for Miss Farren, by Mr. W. Moy Thomas, called *A Nice Girl*, followed in rapid succession. Two importations from the music halls, introduced at first in the morning's harlequinade, but promoted afterwards in the evening bill, were the so-called "Dancing Quakers," Mr. Ryley and Miss Barnum, whose *Can-Can à la Tartuffe*, as it ought to have been called, was the excitement and

the topic of 1873. There were many people, of course, who saw little in it but impropriety, and the Lord Chamberlain of the period (Lord Sydney) was pestered with letters asking him to exercise his authority and stop the performance. The only impropriety I could see myself was in the title, as the "Dancing *Quakers*" seemed to fix a stigma on one particular religious body. The Lord Chamberlain eventually came to see the dance, and hear the song, and being a man of the world, he saw no just cause for interference. In sympathy with the troubles of a much worried department, I struck out the words in the song—"the Spirit moves us"—and put in "impulse," or some equally stupid substitute. Equal in attraction was the dancing of Miss Rose Fox, the other music-hall importation, a young lady of singular grace and cleverness, whom I discovered at a "penny gaff" in Shoreditch, while I was taking a distinguished party round the East End of London. She brought with her a "skipping-rope dance," which she performed with even more skill and elegance than the inventor of the dance, Madame Ramsden, who was with me while I was stage director of the Alhambra in 1866. Miss Rose Fox was soon copied by a score of dancers, who never attained her freedom and precision of action. The "gaff" in which I discovered her I had to value, in the fulness of time, as an "expert" for a new street being planned by the Metropolitan Board of Works.

The interest taken in the stage at this time

(about the close of 1872) was much the same as it is at the present moment. The years roll by, but human nature remains the same. I received the following communication from St. John's College, Cambridge, dated November 10th, 1872:—

"I take the liberty of asking you to supply me by return of post with some information regarding the private life of actors and actress [*sic*], whether moral or otherwise, as a rule; also the names of two or three whom you consider the best tragic actors. Whether you think it would pay to put a more classical and refined kind of play on the boards than there is at present; the class from which actors and actresses are generally taken; your opinion as to the power of the stage to elevate or debase the sentiments of the nation. I want this information for a debate here on Tuesday evening. Hoping you [*sic*] send me some answers to these questions."

Etc., etc.

This, to use a common expression, was rather "a large order" by "return of post," and was only equalled by a gentleman who left three dramas at the stage door, written in Pitman's shorthand, with a request that a definite proposal for the whole three might be ready by the following morning.

February 17th, 1873, a new burlesque by Reece on the subject of *Don Giovanni* was produced, Mr. Toole playing the "Don" and Miss Farren "Leporello." The scenery—Venetian—was by Messrs.

Telbin & Son, very beautiful and artistic; but the stage being small, I had to curtail it. The artists, accustomed to the opera stage, had absolutely left no room for the actors!

This piece had hardly settled down to its work, when that annual annoying break—Ash Wednesday—came, and the following programme was substituted (for one night only), as I never closed the house if I could help it :—

GAIETY THEATRE, Strand.—TO-NIGHT.

THE ONLY THEATRE OPEN at the West-end TO-NIGHT (Wednesday).

GAIETY.—GREAT MUSIC-HALL ENTERTAINMENT TO-NIGHT (Wednesday).

GAIETY.—Mr. MACKNEY, TO-NIGHT.

GAIETY.—THE DANCING QUAKERS, TO-NIGHT.

GAIETY.—The FULL ORCHESTRA, TO-NIGHT, and Herr LUTZ.

GAIETY.—The VAUGHAN SISTERS, Miss Nelly Moore, Miss Howard, Miss Harrington, the Pedley Family, Miss Julian, Miss Miles, Miss Griffiths, Miss Barnum, Miss Barth, Miss Cook, Miss West, Miss Rose Fox, and Miss Loseby.—TO-NIGHT.

GAIETY.—Mr. MACKNEY, Mr. Ryley, Mr. Randall, Mr. Rowley, Herr Jonghmans, Mr. Nash, Lieut. Cole, Mr. George, Mr. Fredericks, Mr. Barnum, Mr. Miles, Mr. Wood, and Mr. Tamplin.—TO-NIGHT.

KATE VAUGHAN

MORE VARIETY

GAIETY.—GREATEST VARIETY ever given in one night. —TO-NIGHT (Wednesday). Open 6.30, begin 7, close 11.15. Prices from *6d.* No fees.

GAIETY.—The DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES will be RESUMED TO-MORROW NIGHT.

Mr. Toole was playing farces that night either in Birmingham, Bradford, or Nottingham. The above programme has a slight interest. It was Miss Kate Vaughan's first appearance at the Gaiety as a dancer only.

The Licensing Act of 1872 (Lord Aberdare's Act) now came into operation, and the connexion between the theatre and the restaurant, part of the original design, had to be destroyed by a two-foot brick wall, dividing one property into two. Much pen and ink was used on the occasion.

Weekly Despatch, March 29th, 1873 :—

"Mr. John Hollingshead, of the Gaiety Theatre, the author of an immense number of newspaper paragraphs on a variety of subjects, including stage copyright and the god Brahma, etc., etc., under the heading, 'ACCORDING TO ACT OF PARLIAMENT,' has favoured some ten or twelve journals with a little notice to the effect that, owing to the new Licensing Act, 'the ladies and gentlemen who, for the last five years, have walked comfortably from their dinners to this theatre, or from this theatre to their suppers, will, on and after Monday next, have to descend a long flight of stairs, pass round a

(probably muddy) street, and ascend another long flight of stairs, if they wish to combine eating with their amusements. The theatre is liberally supplied with drink under another Act of Parliament."

The Times, March 29th, 1873 :—

"'ACCORDING TO ACT OF PARLIAMENT.'

"TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE TIMES.'

"SIR,—

"I have read with astonishment in *The Times* of this date Mr. Hollingshead's letter, in which he informs the public that, in accordance with the provisions of an Act of Parliament, the direct communications between the several floors of the Gaiety Theatre and the corresponding floors of the Gaiety Restaurant, built under the same roof, are about to be closed.

"I know nothing about the subject of food and drink in connexion with theatrical entertainments, and take no interest in it; but, in the interests of humanity, I think it right to express a hope that there may be found in this metropolis some power strong enough to prevent so barbarous—I had almost said so murderous—an act as the closing of communications which at present afford an immediate exit from several different parts of the house in case of emergency.

"The provisions made by public authorities for the safety of life in theatres are not numerous, and,

in case of emergency, are not likely to prove successful; and it is, therefore, most disheartening to hear that a heavy blow is about to be struck at the efforts of a private individual in this direction. It may be that the communications in question were established for commercial purposes; but, as I said before, I have nothing to do with that branch of the subject. My object is to point out that it is most desirable to have on every level of a theatre close to the seats a space sufficient to receive instantly that part of the audience in the immediate vicinity, allowing at the rate of 2½ square feet for each individual, or 250 square feet for 100 persons; and that the wider this place of retreat is, the more favourable it will be for safety. Thus, while a space of 100 feet by 2½ feet would be sufficient, one of 50 feet by 5 feet would be preferable, and one of 25 feet by 10 feet infinitely better; but the great object is to have the space provided in any shape, and to have direct and unobstructed access to it, so as to insure the immediate safety of an audience in case of fire.

"I have long feared that the public mind would not be awakened to the necessity of some methodized system being established for the safety of life in theatres, until startled by some great catastrophe; but, until I read Mr. Hollingshead's letter to-day, I could not have believed it possible that responsible public authorities would deliberately issue an order to cut off the retreat provided for the audience of a theatre in case of fire or panic.

"I presume that the Lord Chamberlain has already protested against this most dangerous proceeding, and that his protest will be attended to; but, if not, it may well be asked—Who is responsible for the safety of life in theatres?

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"EYRE M. SHAW, *Chief Officer*,
"*Metropolitan Fire Brigade.*

"METROPOLITAN FIRE BRIGADE,
"Chief Station, Watling Street,
"*March* 28."

The Conservative, April 5th, 1873:—

"Most of our London readers are doubtless aware that in the front of the Gaiety Theatre is a *restaurant*, to which the patrons of the dramas there represented had free access, if they wished to recruit their energies without leaving the house. The communication between this *restaurant* and the *auditorium* formed one of the facilities for an escape from the premises in the sad event of an alarm of fire; but now, in consequence of some inharmonious co-operation of the provisions of the Licensing Bill with the rights of the Lord Chamberlain, the passages are blocked up, and the possibility of accident to life and limb is augmented by the direct working of the legislature.

"In whose interest the law has been brought to this disgraceful condition we do not profess to understand. Certainly those pets of Mr. Bruce

(afterwards Lord Aberdare), the teetotalers, have nothing to do with it, for the closing of the *restaurant* does not involve any interference with the sale of wine and spirits within the theatre. A thirsty soul may get as drunk as he pleases at the bar, but the hungry soul is forbidden to taste a steak or a chop without walking into the Strand. Shall we risk a bold guess and surmise that this absurd attack on the consumption of butcher's meat is a movement in favour of the vegetarians?"

The Architect, April 5th, 1873:—

EGRESS FROM THEATRES.

"The importance of having the utmost facility for leaving theatres or other public buildings seems to be so evident that it is impossible to understand why it should not be universally recognised. Yet it appears that the Licensing Act has been so interpreted by the authorities, that the direct communications between the several floors of the Gaiety Theatre and the corresponding floor of the restaurant which forms part of the same pile of building are bricked up. The Gaiety Theatre is probably the most successful theatre in London, and is, therefore, nightly crowded. If unfortunately there was an accident, or a panic, which caused a rush, the consequences must be disastrous. Captain Shaw, of the fire brigade, characterizes the Act as murderous, and a more fitting term could not be found. It is true that the communications were originally

established, not so much to promote the safety of an audience as to bring customers to the restaurant, but as they exist they should be suffered to remain, unless substitutes were provided for them. 'It is, as Captain Shaw says, 'most desirable to have on every level of a theatre close to the seats a space sufficient to receive instantly that part of the audience in the immediate vicinity, allowing at the rate of 2½ square feet for each individual, or 250 square feet for 100 persons; and that the wider this place of retreat is, the more favourable it will be for safety. Thus, while a space of 100 feet by 2½ feet would be sufficient, one of 50 feet by 5 feet would be preferable, and one of 25 feet by 10 feet infinitely better; but the great object is to have the space provided in any shape, and to have direct and unobstructed access to it, so as to insure the immediate safety of an audience in case of fire.' One would imagine that this was understood at least by those who have the protection of life in the metropolis, or are supposed to be responsible for that protection, and what makes the case more extraordinary is, that there appears to be no remedy unless the Lord Chamberlain takes the matter up and appeals. Such are the intricacies of the great circumlocution departments."

I notified the Lord Chamberlain that, as my theatre had been mutilated by Act of Parliament, and the safety of the public considerably diminished in case of fire or panic, I declined to take the usual managerial responsibility. The Lord Chamberlain

(I believe) went to the Home Secretary, Mr. Vernon Harcourt (now Sir William), and he gave the usual official answer: "He could not alter an Act of Parliament." I stuck up a notice outside the bricked-up outlets, saying they were closed by "Molly-coddling Legislation." I did more than write and print, I dodged and acted. I shifted the outer iron gate of the main entrance in the Strand—the street-door of the theatre—a few feet inwards, creating sidings through which door communications were cut and access was got to the restaurant on both sides at the foot of the grand staircase, without going into the street. I paid a thousand pounds a year in rates and taxes, and this was how I had to swindle the Legislature and the Government. I was the clown with the red-hot-poker, defeating the policeman. Life and business, after all, are only a pantomime. This was in March, 1873. In March, 1898, the two-foot brick-wall is still standing!

CHAPTER VI

A Theatrical Treadmill

AFTER one or two small changes of programme, and the revival of Kenney's old adapted comedy *Sweethearts and Wives*, in which Mr. Toole played Liston's original part of "Billy Lackaday" for his benefit, Mr. Toole went to the country for his summer tour, as usual, and the bill was changed in its entirety at Easter. Douglas Jerrold's *Prisoner of War* was revived, Mr. Lionel Brough being the principal low comedian. The burlesque was written by Mr. R. Reece, the subject being Flotow's opera of *Martha*. Miss Farren unfortunately was taken seriously ill, and the company consisted of Miss Annie Sinclair, Miss C. Loseby, Miss Marion West, Miss Rachel Sanger, Mr. Aynsley Cook, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Miss Alice Cook, and others.

The following remarks (*Daily Telegraph*, April 15th, 1873) show that the old care and liberality were bestowed upon the production :—

"The list of impossibilities in which gilding refined gold and painting the lily play a conspicuous part, would appear to gain a new recruit each new Gaiety extravaganza we see. Looking at the brilliant shows here provided, each one apparently better than the last, we keep on wondering if Zero

has yet turned up. Can anything more be done in decoration, anything more extravagant in costume? Can a ballet be still dressed better? Can new colour be still introduced? We own we thought not until *Martha* appeared on the scene, with costumes quite dazzling, with a perfect glow of colour, and with one forest picture which is likely to rival the famous scene by Hawes Craven, in a Covent Garden pantomime, some years ago."

It was gratifying at this time to learn that a Gaiety Theatre had been started at Hankow in China,—of course by the English residents.

A series of English operas were started at the *matinées*, with a company strengthened by many engagements of vocalists outside the regular company of the theatre. The repertory was selected principally from the works of Balfe, Wallace, and Benedict. Balfe had always been very friendly to the theatre, and I may quote the following letter:—

"154, Avenue des Champs Elysées,
"Paris, *Nov.* 27, 1869.

"My dear Sir,—

"You are welcome to make use of any of my tunes for your extravaganzas.

"Yours truly,
"W. M. BALFE.

"J. Hollingshead, Esq.,
"London."

Lovers of old-fashioned music—tunes and music, not merely melodic science—were treated to the

drama by Daniel Jervis founded on Sir Walter Scott's *Guy Mannering*, turned almost into an opera by Sir Henry Bishop.

Mr. Charles Mathews returned from the provinces for his second engagement of five weeks, which closed on June 28th, 1873. The following record of work, unexampled, I should think, in the time, in any London theatre, was published under the heading of—

"A RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW."

On SATURDAY NIGHT, June 28th, 1873, MR. CHARLES MATHEWS will close his Second Engagement, and with it will close the Fifth Season of the Theatre. The GAIETY THEATRE, opened December 21st, 1868, has only been closed four weeks during a period of nearly five years; and these four weeks have been more than counterbalanced by 98 Morning Performances. The Gaiety Morning Peformances have introduced a new principle—that of giving an entertainment distinct from the night programme, and varying at nearly every representation. During the five seasons in question, ABOUT ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY PIECES have been produced; amongst the COMEDIES, DRAMAS, etc., may be mentioned :—

"DREAMS," "AN OLD SCORE," "A LIFE CHASE," "UNCLE DICK'S DARLING," "THE HUNCHBACK," "THE MAN OF QUALITY," "POOR NOBLEMAN," "WAIT AND HOPE," "BACHELOR OF ARTS," "COURIER OF LYONS," "DOCTOR DAVY," "DOT," "PAUL PRY," "HAMLET,"

"Lady of Lyons," "Othello," "Louis XI.," "As You Like It," "New Way to Pay Old Debts," "Honeymoon," "Romeo and Juliet," "Richard III.," "Donna Diana," "Serious Family," "Love for Love," "Night and Morning," "Elfie," "Dearer than Life," "Shilly-Shally," "Colleen Bawn," "Arrah-na-Pogue," "John Bull," "Good News," "The Critic," "Used Up," "Married for Money," "Game of Speculation," "Trotty Veck," "Sweethearts and Wives," "Prisoner of War," "The Liar."

Amongst the Burlesques and Operas Bouffe have been :—

"Robert the Devil," "Columbus," "Linda of Chamouni," "Wat Tyler," "Princess of Trebizonde," "Blue Beard," "Aladdin II.," "Malala," "Grand Duchess," "Les Bavards," "Chanson de Fortunio," "Chevaliers de la Table Ronde," "Belle Hélène" (in French and English); "Canard à Trois Becs," "Galatea," "Cinderella," "Thespis," "Cox and Box," "Ali Baba," "Don Giovanni," "Martha," etc.

And at the Morning Performances :—

"Geneviève de Brabant," "Fleur de Lys," "Isaac of York," and "Chilperic."

Amongst the Operas (in English) have been :—

"Beggars' Opera," "Betly," "Zampa," "Fra Diavolo," "Peter the Shipwright" (First time in England); "Letty," "Guy Mannering," "Maritana," "Bohemian Girl," "Lily of Killarney," etc.

The Musical Composers represented have been :

E. Jonas, Delibes, Offenbach, Lutz, Adolphe Adam, Donizetti, Herold, Auber, Hervé, Lortzing, Balfe, Arthur Sullivan, Suppée, Bishop, Wallace, Benedict, etc.

The Authors represented have been: W. S. Gilbert, T. W. Robertson, Alfred Thompson, John Oxenford, H. J. Byron, George Augustus Sala, Sheridan Knowles, Vanbrugh, Tom Taylor, Charles Reade, Albery, Planché, Gay, Dion Boucicault, Shakespeare, Lord Lytton, Sir Walter Scott, Westland Marston, Congreve, Colman, Reece, Sheridan, Charles Mathews, Douglas Jerrold, Tobin, Massinger, Delavigne, Foote, Farnie, Poole, Kenney, etc.

The exponents of these pieces have been: Mr. Alfred Wigan, Mr. John Clayton, Mr. S. Emery, Mr. Henry Neville, Mr. J. L. Toole, Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. J. Eldred, Mr. Hermann Vezin, Mr. Stoyle, Mr. Santley, Mr. Sims Reeves, Mr. William Rignold, Mr. Dion Boucicault, Mr. Charles Mathews, Mr. H. Sinclair, Mr. Lionel Brough, Mr. R. Soutar, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Aynsley Cook, Mr. Walter Montgomery, Mr. W. Castle, Mr. George Perren, Miss Madge Robertson, Miss E. Farren, Miss C. Loseby, Miss Tremaine, Miss Rachel Sanger, Miss Henrade, Miss Rose Coghlan, Miss Neilson, Madame Florence Lancia, Miss Julia Matthews, Miss Litton, Miss Carlotta Addison, Mrs. Keeley, Miss Dolaro, Miss Blanche Cole, Miss Ada Cavendish, Mlle. Clary, Mrs. Dion Boucicault, Miss Lydia Foote, Miss Fanny Brough, Miss E. Fowler, Mrs. Billington, Miss Annie Sinclair, Miss Lucy Franklein, Mrs. Henry Leigh, and Mlle. Roseri.

The French Company of the Fantaisies Parisiennes, MM. Mario-Widmer, Jolly, Ed. Georges, Mlle. Paolo Marie, etc. And at the Morning Performances, Miss Emily Soldene and the Philharmonic Company, and Mr. E. Righton and the Court Company, etc.

During this period the GAIETY COMPANY has played in Manchester, Sheffield, Preston, Liverpool, Bradford, Dublin, Belfast, Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bristol, Leicester, Wolverhampton, Cambridge, Portsmouth, Norwich, Yarmouth, Colchester, Ipswich, Rochester, Lynn, Reading, Bath, Greenwich, Greenock, Sunderland, Leeds, Bolton, etc., etc. And at the London Suburban Theatres: Marylebone, Standard, Elephant and Castle, Surrey, Pavilion, Crystal Palace, etc.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

As I said in my *Autobiography*, "A document like this is stiff reading, and only interesting as a theatrical record, of the *Genest* kind, but its additional publication may do a little good by dispelling the illusion that theatrical management—properly so-called—is an idle trade, and that a manager has little else to do than to pick his teeth half the day, dine with dukes one night and demireps the next, or sit in luxuriously furnished green-room divans with a ballet-girl on each knee and unlimited champagne on the table, like a Brummagem Sardanapalus. The work represented by that document would stagger a cotton-spinner or a soap-boiler. It is work that cannot be done by machinery, steam-

power, water-power, electric-power, deputed-power, or any human or scientific agency invented for the service of man. It has to be done by brains, tact, and temper, acting on a multitude of men, women, and children, each one of whom is fearfully and wonderfully human—filled with ambition, vanity, desire to shine, belief in latent or checked ability, pettishness, natural insubordination, the spirit of school-children at a school, liable to be impressed by relatives, friends, enemies, and large and small newspapers, liable to fits of jealousy, with or without foundation ;—in fact, *the* profession, as it is called,—a heterogeneous collection of actors and actresses. All these delicate parts of a great living, breathing, palpitating machine have to be put together in a way to please that many-headed tyrant, the public—an entity that knows what it wants for the hour, and will have it, but refuses to give any sign, remaining provoking, and mysteriously dumb and inarticulate, leaving the manager to grope his way to light and success, or to stumble in the dark and perish with failure ;—a public that probably hates to-day what it worshipped yesterday, and will possibly worship again to-morrow. In addition to this, the manager is caged in with authors, artists, and artistic costumiers, with prejudices, fads, theories, obstinacy, temper, determination, taste, or want of taste, and a full and divine belief in their own infallibility. With all this and more to mould and adulterate character, can it be wondered at if a large percentage of theatrical managers become unmitigated humbugs ?"

As the patrons of a theatre like to know more

about the future than the past, they were comforted with the following announcements on the fly-leaf of the programme. This programme was always a very practical publication. It told people what they wanted to know, and it warned them from almost every side and corner, top, bottom, and middle, not to give fees and attempt to demoralize the servants.

Here is a sample of the heart of the front page, cut out from its artistic border :—

No Fees for Booking, Programmes, or Cloak Rooms.

NO FEES. NO FEES.

Last Train, Charing Cross . . .	12.15
Last Train, Victoria	12.5
Omnibuses to all parts from Charing Cross to	12·8

—o—

Retiring Rooms for Ladies on Every Floor.
Lavatories for Gentlemen on Every Floor.

Ask for a Programme and give no Fee.

—o—

Evening Papers in the Balcony Lobby.
Telegrams from the Houses of Parliament every half-hour.

—o—

Doors open at	6.30
Drama at	7
Columbus at	9.30
2 a.m. at	10.15
Carriages at	11.15

No Fees for Booking, Programmes, or Cloak Rooms.

It will be seen by this that some of the "comforts of a club" were provided.

GAIETY MORNING PERFORMANCES.

SATURDAY MORNING NEXT, JUNE 21.

CHILPERIC

Chilpéric ... ... Miss EMILY SOLDENE

Supported by the Original Cast.

CHARLES MATHEWS,

On *Saturday Night Next, June 21st,* as SIR CHARLES COLDSTREAM, in

USED UP and THE LIAR,

His last Seven Nights.

PROSPECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS.

On Monday, June 30,

MR. GEORGE CONQUEST

Will make his appearance in a New Supernatural, Pantomimic, and Musical Drama, entitled—

THE SNAE FELL.

Written by PAUL MERITT and HENRY SPRY.

Embracing Mr. GEORGE CONQUEST's well-known Pantomimic Effects. During this engagement Miss CONSTANCE LOSEBY (her first appearance since her indisposition), Miss TREMAINE, Mr. MACDERMOTT, and Mr. ROYCE will join the Company.

On *Saturday*, the 28th inst., at 2 o'clock, a COMPLIMENTARY BENEFIT will be given to Mr. EMERY, when the chief members of the leading Metropolitan Theatres will appear, having most kindly given their valuable services. Full particulars will be immediately published. Boxes, Stalls, &c., can be secured at the Box Office Daily.

A THEATRICAL TREADMILL

MR. J. L. TOOLE

(having abandoned his intention, for the present, of going to America) will re-appear for a short season of Eight Weeks at the Gaiety, commencing MONDAY, AUGUST 4.

MISS E. FARREN

(*Who has partly recovered from her recent severe illness*) will re-appear on Monday, August 4.

PROVINCIAL ARRANGEMENTS.—The London Gaiety Comedy and Burlesque Company in Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Sheffield, during June and July.

STANDARD THEATRE, Bishopsgate.—The Gaiety Opera Bouffe Company in Offenbach's *Grand Duchess*.

Musical Director	HERR MEYER LUTZ
Stage Manager	MR. R. SOUTAR
Assistant Acting Manager ...	MR. W. H. GRIFFITHS
Deputy Conductor	MR. CAULFIELD
Ballet Director	MR. J. MILANO

There are three statements in this announcement worth drawing attention to. Mr. Macdermott, who supported Mr. George Conquest in his acrobatic drama, left the stage eventually for the music-halls, and was the gentleman who sang the great Jingo song, "We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do!" etc. Mr. Edward Royce joined the company for the first time, and Miss Farren's illness was undoubtedly the first indication of that organic disease which rendered her practically helpless nearly twenty years afterwards.

After Mr. George Conquest's engagement, Mr. Toole returned (August 4th, 1873), and happily with him Miss E. Farren. They began with old pieces, including the *Ali Baba* burlesque. An adaptation of the famous Palais Royal farcical comedy, *Tricoche et Cacolet*, was produced under the title of *Bibb and Tucker*. The chief work in it rested upon J. L. Toole and Lionel Brough, though Miss E. Farren, Miss E. Duncan, Mr. J. Maclean, and Mr. Soutar were in the cast. The two low comedians had nearly as many "quick changes" as "Fregoli" and his imitators. The adapter was Mr. John Clayton. The piece was full of cleverness, as it was written by Meilhac and Halévy, and it was played in Paris by the most wonderful cast ever seen, even at the Palais Royal.

Mr. Reece had now become the chief purveyor of burlesque and *apropos* sketches to the theatre. He was a quick worker, very modest, very amiable, and very clever. He worked with me and for me for several years, and might almost be described as my stock dramatic author.

Mr. F. C. Burnand, an old friend, and the present editor of *Punch*, gave me, about this time, his valuable aid. He began with a slight classical burlesque called *Antony and Cleopatra*—the first of a long series of pieces, in which, in numbers, he distanced all his competitors. Like Reece, Burnand was a most pleasant author in a theatre, ready and willing, and successful or unsuccessful (he was generally the former), he was always cheerful. I was not myself

F. C. BURNAND

a moping manager. My policy was pretty well expressed by the saying, "One down and the other come on." I knew my restless activity—industry that cost me thousands, which indolence would have saved—and I called myself the "Parched Pea in the Frying Pan." I was never supposed (in "the profession") to be thoroughly happy unless the Gaiety stage was occupied either with a *matinée* function, a rehearsal, or a performance. The *matinées* were sometimes very much like rehearsals. I did not pay a heavy rent—the heaviest at that time in London, for the size of the house—to keep the theatre closed like a mausoleum. I was successful, and success in an age of bullion-worship condones much. My eighteen years' unbroken and strenuous management produced me £120,000 for my own pocket money. My original capital was £200. I played up to and justified the flippant title of the theatre. It was the Gaiety when I took it, it was the Gaiety when I left it to my clever and prosperous successor. I held the wine and spirit licence for the other Gaiety twin—the Restaurant. I was a licensed victualler, though I tempered my gin and beer with music and dancing. I should only have been acting in accordance with the Licensing Acts, and my policy, if I put up over the stage-door, "John Hollingshead, licensed dealer in legs, short skirts, French adaptations, Shakespeare, Taste, and the Musical Glasses."

I changed the bill after Mr. Toole's short intermediate engagement, and brought down the most popular

company then playing in the suburbs. *La Fille de Madame Angot*—the musical piece of the day—had been so well done by Miss Emily Soldene and Mr. Charles Morton's company at the Philharmonic Theatre at Islington, that I had them all down for six weeks, using the Gaiety band and chorus. The version given was Mr. Farnie's. The experiment was so successful that at the end of the term, having made other arrangements, I took the Opéra Comique Theatre in the Strand (for the first time, but not for the last) with Mr. Charles Morton, and together we continued the "run" of the opera for several months. It made a great reputation for Lecocq, the composer, which quite overshadowed Offenbach's for a time; but Lecocq had not the "staying power" of his master and greater rival. Lecocq never quite equalled his early Brussels work, although he was taken willingly into the arms of Paris.

I now produced what I called "The Nine Days' Wonder." Having nine days vacant before Christmas, I determined to make a *coup de théâtre.* I had engaged Mr. Phelps, principally for *matinées*; and as I was ending the first of my short Gaiety leases, the idea occurred to me to do it with becoming spirit. This time it was a combination of men rather than of costumes and scenery. My plan was to get Phelps, Toole, Mathews, with Lionel Brough (then a member of my company), Hermann Vezin, and others to act together in *The Hypocrite* and *John Bull.* I had great difficulty in carrying out my plan, as the "star" system, which much annoyed

Charles Dickens, had firmly taken the place of strong casts, and I met with much good-natured but determined opposition from two of the principal actors. Toole wrote to me from the country under the impression that I had lost faith in him as an individual attraction; Charles Mathews consented unwillingly, warning me that I was destroying his value as a lonely star, or planet—a value in which I was as much interested as he was himself. Phelps consented readily. He said little but thought much, and inquired curiously of Toole what my Machiavellian policy really meant, taking, to some extent, the same view as Mathews. It was not with me a question of money. I gave Phelps what he asked—£100 a week. This amount was at that time Toole's regular salary, and it was Charles Mathews' payment when he was not on sharing terms. My judgment as to the attraction of this novel combination (novel only because of the "starring system") was correct. At the dullest season of the year—a season when any excuse was used for closing: "rehearsals," "great Christmas programme," etc., etc., at theatres not carried on like restaurants —all the seats that could be booked in the theatre were sold for the nine nights a couple of months in advance. As the two chief actors who were to appear were each over seventy years of age, this caused me a little anxiety. The time came, however, and with it the men. I had to displace the band, and turn the orchestra into stalls.

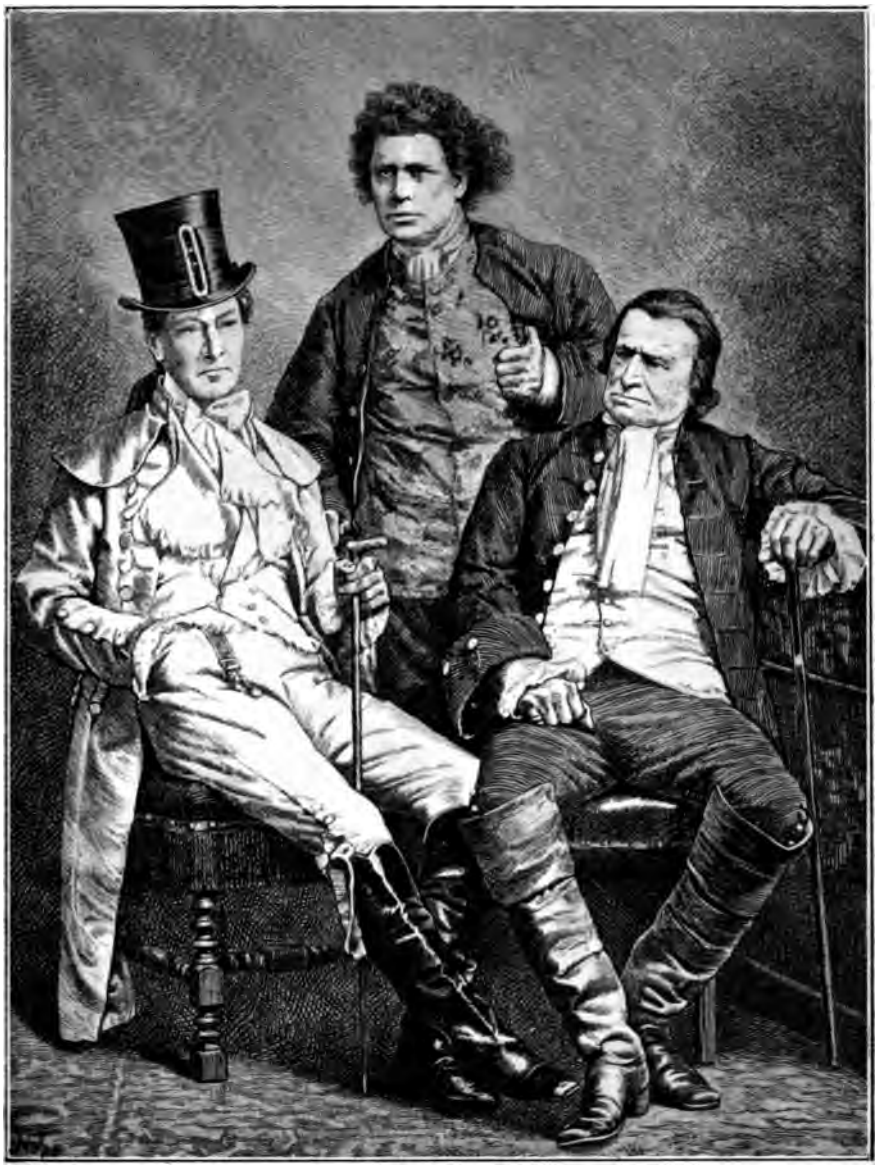
The Hypocrite (Bickstaffe's adaptation of Molière's *Tartufe*) had the following cast :—

Dr. Cantwell	Mr. SAMUEL PHELPS
Mawworm	Mr. J. L. TOOLE
Colonel Lambert	Mr. W. H. VERNON
Seyward	Mr. CHARLES NEVILLE
Sir John Lambert	Mr. J. MACLEAN
Darnley	Mr. TEESDALE
Charlotte	Miss E. FARREN
Lady Lambert	Mrs. H. LEIGH
Miss Lambert	Miss C. LOSEBY

This comedy was played for six nights. The remaining three nights were devoted to George Colman's comedy of *John Bull*—a thoroughly green-room piece, written originally to fit every member of the Drury Lane company of 1803. The cast was :—

Job Thornberry	Mr. SAMUEL PHELPS
Hon. Tom Shuffleton ...	Mr. CHARLES MATHEWS
Denis Bulgruddery	Mr. J. L. TOOLE
Peregrine	Mr. HERMANN VEZIN
Dan	Mr. LIONEL BROUGH
Sir Simon Rochdale	Mr. JOHN MACLEAN
Frank Rochdale	Mr. CHARLES NEVILLE
John Burr	Mr. R. SOUTAR
Mr. Penniman	Mr. E. BUTLER
Simon	Mr. DALTON
Mary Thornberry	Miss CARLISLE
Mrs. Bulgruddery	Mrs. H. LEIGH
Lady Caroline Braymore	Miss ELEANOR BUFTON

We opened 1874 with Dickens's Christmas Story, *The Battle of Life*, adapted by his son,



CHARLES MATHEWS JOHN L. TOOLE SAMUEL PHELPS

Mr. Charles Dickens, jun., and the first burlesque —the beginning of many—which Mr. Henry J. Byron wrote for the theatre. It was called *Guy Fawkes*. The dresses, as usual, were designed by Alfred Thompson.

Mr. H. J. Byron had his own peculiar method of rehearsing. He wrote anything into the piece that was wanted, on the spur of the moment, and left the task of putting everything together to the actors, the stage manager, the musical director, and the manager. He would come late and make jokes on all subjects in stage corners. As I always wore a very high shirt-collar, he gave me the name of "Jack the Giant *Collar*." Many jokes he never made were fathered on him. He was not the joker who, in answer to the remark, "You never wear a great coat?" replied, "No; I never was." This joke was Frank Talfourd's, an earlier burlesque writer, the son of Mr. Justice Talfourd, the author of *Ion*. Byron's favourite amusement was to tell endless stories of a lady in the profession, celebrated for her malapropisms. Not one-tenth of those attributed to her were ever uttered. "I want them doors kep' shet," may have been a true remark she once made at rehearsal; but, if so, it was an exceptional sample of her ordinary grammar. Byron, at rehearsal, used to stroke his long black moustache in a contemplative way, and seize the first opportunity of creeping out of the theatre unobserved. He knew all the exits and entrances. His chief amusement was to take houses in various parts

of London, and sometimes in the country. He often had as many as three on his hands at one time. This made him difficult to find on an emergency. He was quite a genius in his way, very popular and successful. He was a quiet, gentlemanly companion. His jokes came to him without effort. He was much criticised, and the chief complaint against him was that his "output" was too large and too rapid. The same might have been said of the elder Dumas and Lopez de Vega.

At Easter, 1874, Mr. Phelps returned and played the part of "Lord Ogleby" in *The Clandestine Marriage*—one of the leading characters in his large comedy repertory. Being an old school actor, he had a repertory like a leading singer at the opera, and was not paid to be taught his business by his manager. *The Clandestine Marriage* is thus described in one of my "programme notes" :—

The Clandestine Marriage was first produced at Drury Lane Theatre, February 20th, 1766, the authors being George Colman and David Garrick. The subject was suggested by Hogarth's *Mariage à la Mode*, and three of the principal characters, 'Lord Ogleby,' 'Mr. Sterling,' the vulgar city merchant, and 'Brush,' were taken bodily from a farce by the Rev. James Townley, called *False Concord*. Colman always ignored Garrick's share in the authorship, and Garrick always underrated the talent of King, who first created the character of 'Lord Ogleby'—an example of the gratitude

of collaborators and authors who are also managers and actors. 'Lord Ogleby' is much more than a mere study of manners, and 'Canton' is about as fair a picture of the Swiss as Scribe's 'Lord All-cash' is of the English."

George Honey joined the company, and the Easter afterpiece was a burlesque in plain clothes, which had again the unpardonable fault of being born about twenty years before its time. Burlesque has assumed three forms during the last thirty years: in short clothes at the Gaiety, in long clothes at the Savoy, and in more or less plain clothes, called "musical comedy," in various theatres in the "nineties." Mr. Burnand's piece, founded on a French original, was remarkable for a title of abnormal length. It was called *The Great Metropolis; or, the Wonderful Adventures of Daddy Daddles and his son in their journeying from Stoke-in-the-Mud to Venice (viâ London) with "Diddler's Tourist Tickets."* To this might have been added *Personally Conducted.* The exponents of this burlesque in plain clothes were George Honey, Charles Lyall, J. G. Taylor, M. Perrini, Miss E. Farren, Miss C. Loseby, and several others. The music was a clever *pasticcio* selected by Herr Meyer Lutz. The *Great Metropolis*, etc., was a pioneer, and it met with the fate of pioneers in general. While its bones are bleaching in the desert, its followers are gaily prancing over the road that is now open and familiar.

A "society piece" in six acts (from the French),

by Dion Boucicault, called *Led Astray*, was produced in July, 1874—the worst period of the year, —and it is chiefly worthy of passing notice because it introduced Miss Helen Barry to the comedy stage, and two American actors, Mr. Charles Thorne and Mr. Stuart Robson. Mr. Charles Thorne is dead; but had he lived and remained in England, he would have become a second Fechter. I may quote from the *Times*, July 4th, 1874, which was generally fair, but very critical. The writer was Mr. John Oxenford :—

"In putting *Led Astray* upon the stage, no expense has been spared by Mr. John Hollingshead. Though the piece is virtually a comedy, and the action goes on in modern Paris, every one of the decorations is an elaborate work of scenic art, and those who do not sympathise with the play may admire the spectacle."

In the autumn of the same year we went back to comic opera, and selected Lecocq's *Cent Vierges*, produced under the title of the *Island of Bachelors* —the libretto by Mr. R. Reece. The Gaiety company was strengthened by Mr. Arthur Cecil and Miss Kate Munroe. Mr. Charles Lyall returned. Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Ludwig, Miss Alice Cook, Mrs. Leigh, Miss Loseby, and Miss Farren were well placed in the opera. The performance, even by musical critics, was considered excellent, thanks to the care and ability of Herr Meyer Lutz, who passed his time pleasantly and profitably in the Strand, while his brother, the

Prime Minister of Bavaria, was having his long theological controversy with Dr. Döllinger.

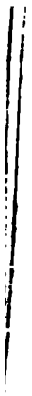
The next change of any importance was the production of a short farcical play by Mr. H. J. Byron, called *Oil and Vinegar*. The cast included Arthur Cecil, J. G. Taylor, Maclean, Soutar, Miss E. Farren, Miss West, and Mrs. Leigh. Mr. Cecil and Miss Farren gave a burlesque of music-hall singing, and Mrs. Leigh astonished the audience by going through a "vampire" trap like an acrobatic pantomimist.

The following from the *Morning Post* of November 25th, 1874, explains another change of programme:—

"As a prelude to the already attractive piece, *Oil and Vinegar*, the very familiar comic opera, *La Fille de Madame Angot*, has been added at this theatre, with a cast that would have been sufficient to have secured a popularity for it had it been an entirely new work, and, as a well-known production, invests it with a character and distinction of special excellence. The parts are assigned to very able exponents, who appear to have made a careful study of the parts they play, so that it may with some degree of truth be said that the comic opera is here given with a point and effect not hitherto attained. Miss Constance Loseby, as 'Clairette,' sings and acts in the most pleasing style; Miss Katrine Munroe, a young lady gifted with great personal attractions and charm of manner, is the 'Mdlle. Lange'; Mrs. Leigh is inimitable as the

'Citizeness Hopeful Pandora'; Mr. Ludwig is a commendable 'Larivaudière'; Mr. Taylor, a lively and fantastical 'Trenitz'; Mr. Maclean presents the part of 'Louchard' with much humour; Mr. C. Lyall, as 'Pomponnet,' is the essence of fun and quaint drollery; Mr. E. Cotte is an admirable 'Ange Pitou'; the choruses, both male and female, do their work earnestly and well; and the band, under the direction of Herr Meyer Lutz, contribute no mean share in securing success for one of the best balanced versions of Lecocq's popular work now before the public."

ROSE LECLERCQ



CHAPTER VII

Shakespeare—Ash Wednesday—Charles Mathews—Taste and the Musical Glasses

HAVING Mr. Phelps as my principal actor at Christmas, 1874 (Mr. J. L. Toole had gone to America), I decided to put burlesque on the shelf for a short time and to produce the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, although it did not contain the best of the Falstaffs invented by Shakespeare. It was written "to order" for Queen Elizabeth, which may account for much. I had lent Miss E. Farren to Manchester for the Christmas pantomime at Mr. Charles Calvert's theatre, and I had two other theatres on my hands—the Opéra Comique in the Strand, and the Holborn Amphitheatre. I had companies and programmes for both those houses, and I made up a strong company round Mr. Phelps at the Gaiety.

I cast the *Merry Wives of Windsor* as follows, obtaining some of the actors and actresses with difficulty:—

Sir John Falstaff	Mr. SAMUEL PHELPS
Mr. Ford	Mr. HERMANN VEZIN
Sir Hugh Evans	Mr. RIGHTON
Mr. Page	Mr. BELFORD

Fenton	Mr. Forbes Robertson
Dr. Caius	Mr. Arthur Cecil
Master Slender	Mr. J. G. Taylor
Justice Shallow	Mr. J. Maclean
Host of the Garter	Mr. Graham
Pistol	Mr. Sugar
Bardolph	Mr. Bradshaw
Simple	Mr. Leigh
Robin	Miss Maude Branscombe
Mrs. Page	Mrs. John Wood
Mrs. Ford	Miss Rose Leclercq
Anne Page	Miss Fortardo
Dame Quickly	Mrs. Leigh

The Miss Maude Branscombe in the above cast, though a very short young lady, had a most pretty and effective face that could give any expression, and the result was that she soon became the most photographed young person in the world. The Mr. Leigh was a son of Mrs. Leigh, and is now the popular comedian, "Mr. Denny": and Mr. Bradshaw was an old and well-seasoned actor from the minor theatres, whom I first saw in the days of my childhood at the now extinct City of London Theatre.

Alfred Thompson designed the dresses, and Messrs. Grieve, Gordon, and Harford painted the scenery. The Windsor Forest scene was the work of Mr. Grieve, senior. I got my friend Arthur Sullivan (now Sir Arthur) to compose special music for the play, and I induced Mr. Algernon Swinburne to write the following song, which I took the liberty of inserting in the text of Shakespeare :—

SAMUEL PHELPS

Fenton	Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON
Dr. Caius	Mr. ARTHUR CECIL
Master Slender	Mr. J. G. TAYLOR
Justice Shallow	... Mr. J. MACLEAN
Host of the Garter	... Mr. GRESHAM
Pistol	Mr. SOUTAR
Bardolph	Mr. BRADSHAW
Simple	Mr. LEIGH
Robin	Miss MAUDE BRANSCOMBE
Mrs. Page	Mrs. JOHN WOOD
Mrs. Ford	Miss ROSE LECLERCQ
Anne Page	... Miss FURTARDO
Dame Quickly	Mrs. LEIGH

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SAMUEL PHELPS

SHAKESPEARE

I.

Love laid his sleepless head
On a thorny rose bed;
And his eyes with tears were red,
And pale his lips as the dead.

II.

And fear, and sorrow, and scorn,
Kept watch by his head forlorn,
Till the night was overworn,
And the world was merry with morn.

III.

And Joy came up with the day,
And kissed Love's lips as he lay;
And the watchers, ghostly and grey,
Fled from his pillow away.

IV.

And his eyes at the dawn grew bright;
And his lips waxed ruddy as light—
Sorrow may reign for a night,
But day shall bring back delight.

This song was set to music by Arthur Sullivan, and sung by Miss Furtardo.

The revels round Herne's Oak were performed by a trained band of singing boys, who did justice to Arthur Sullivan's music, which is now a concert classic.

This was Mr. Phelps' first night engagement of any duration at the Gaiety, excepting the nine nights before alluded to, when he appeared in the combination of Phelps, Toole, and Mathews.

My "new departure," to use a favourite phrase, was very liberally supported by the press—much more liberally, I must say, than the horse-collar entertainments of the Gaiety. Criticism there was undoubtedly, but it was criticism inspired by knowledge and sympathy, not by hide-bound prejudice. I quote a few lines from *The Athenæum*, December 26th, 1874:—

"If ever the comedies of Shakespeare are to regain their former prestige as acting plays, and to prove a source of lasting attraction to the public, it is under such conditions as are now realized at the Gaiety. The first requisite to their success speaks of a complete change in the taste of the playgoer. This consists of a small or, at any rate, a moderately-sized theatre. Time has been when Shakespearean comedy found its only home in London in Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Whether our art has now lost its breadth, or the public has learned to like a different style of entertainment, it is, at least, certain that the stage of our large theatres, dangerous and trying enough to the tragedian, proves fatal in the case of comedy. Nothing can be found much more depressing than the sound of small jokes heard across the cavernous stage; and for one or two figures to fill the space, it is necessary that they should have tragic amplitude and dignity. Attention to dresses and decorations is important so far as the public is concerned, and the addition of music is often an advantage. Most important of all, however, is the selection of a cast.

The failure of Shakespeare at Drury Lane is principally assignable to the fact that, while competent actors were secured for the leading characters, subordinate parts were allotted to people fitted for little more than to carry a flag in a procession. Mr. Hollingshead has scrutinized carefully the various companies in London, and has secured for his performances actors who are, if not qualified in all cases, the best obtainable.

* * * * *

"If Mr. Hollingshead employed the company he has now collected in the presentation of different plays of Shakespeare and other early dramatists, he would do a service to the stage, and might, we fancy, prove that such experiments can be made permanently remunerative. The long run of pieces seems fatal to all serious effort in management in this direction, and to all continued advance in art."

Later on the following appeared in the *Standard* of February 18th, 1875:—

"Mr. John Hollingshead is making strenuous efforts upon behalf of the legitimate drama. The three theatres under his management are now devoted to revivals of classical works, the Gaiety producing Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*; the Opéra Comique bringing out *She Stoops to Conquer*; and the Holborn Amphitheatre resuscitating Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*—for years a stranger to the metropolis, though always a favourite 'stock piece' in the provinces, where it is played under the title of *The Bridal*."

Mr. Phelps closed this engagement March 20th, 1875, in a way that is shown in the following advertisement. It will be seen that nothing was stopped for it, and that the future was provided for :—

GAIETY.—THIS MORNING, 2 to 5.

LECOCQ'S ISLAND of BACHELORS, at 3. Preceded by FAST COACH at 2.15. Messrs. Cecil, Taylor, Lyall, Miss Loseby, etc., in their original parts. 157th Matinée.

GAIETY.—TO-NIGHT.—Mr. PHELPS' last night. Gaiety Theatre. Saturday, March 20, 1875.

FALSTAFF, Wolsey, Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, etc., TO-NIGHT.

MR. PHELPS as SIR JOHN FALSTAFF, at 8, in the Garter Inn Scenes, from Merry Wives of Windsor. Ford, Mr. Vezin, etc. 8.30, The Forest Scene from As You Like It: Jacques, Mr. Vezin; Orlando, Mr. Forbes Robertson; Amiens (with songs), Mr. Cotte, etc. At 9, Mr. Phelps as Sir Pertinax Macsycophant in The Man of the World: the Scene describing Sir Pertinax's marriage. 9.20, Scene from the Merchant of Venice: Shylock, Mr. Vezin; Tubal, Mr. Moxon. 9.40, Mr. Phelps will represent the Fall of Wolsey in the Scene from Henry VIII.: King, Mr. Belford; Cromwell, Mr. Forbes Robertson, etc. The performance will commence at 7, with the Last Act of Randall's Thumb, by W. S. Gilbert, with Mr. Righton and nearly the original cast; and conclude with THE WATERMAN, with Mr. Cotte, Miss Pratt, etc., Messrs. Hall, D'Auban, etc. Sole Lessee and Manager, Mr. John Hollingshead.—GAIETY THEATRE, Strand.

GAIETY.—Lord Lytton's MONEY and Offenbach's TROM-BALCAZAR, Monday next. Four nights only. Messrs. Vezin, Righton, Cecil, Taylor, Belford, Maclean, Robertson,

etc.; Misses Carlotta Addison, Ritta, Mrs. Leigh, Miss Loseby, Chorus, and Ballet.

GAIETY.—ROSE MICHEL.—This great French drama, adapted by Mr. Campbell Clarke, will be produced on Saturday night, March 27, with Mrs. Mary Gladstane, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Edgar, Mr. Maclean, Mr. Hall, Mr. Tearle, Mrs. Howard, Miss Hollingshead (by permission of Mr. Hare), and Mr. J. C. Cowper, in the principal characters.

The following letters were created by the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and may be quoted in that connection :—

"*December 25th*, 1874.

"DEAR MR. HOLLINGSHEAD,—

"Mr. Sandys told me that of course there would, in no case, be any question raised of my rights to reprint the song where I pleased, and that for the right to use it afterwards—publish it with the music—he had told you the terms would be what I mentioned yesterday. This is all that passed between us on the subject, and on this understanding the song was written.

"May I beg you to ask Miss Furtardo to return, at her earliest convenience, the other song which I lent her. I leave London in a day or two, and it is important for me to have that song back.

"A. SWINBURNE."

"MY DEAR JOHN,—

"You once settled a precedent for me which may just at present be of great importance to me.

I asked you for the band parts of the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, for performance at the Crystal Palace, and you sent them to me and said, 'They are yours, as our run is over, only you will let me have them whenever we want them,-won't you?'

"I kept them, and some time afterwards you sent to borrow them for a performance at Manchester. I sent them to you at once, and I think you have them still. Now will you please let me have them, and the parts of *Thespis* also, at once. I am detaining the parts of the *Pinafore*, so that the directors shall not take them away from the Comique to-morrow, and I base my claim on the precedent *you* set.

"They will probably fly at me in a court of law, and I want to be able to say, 'Mr. Hollingshead paid for the copying of the pieces I did for him, but returned the parts to me when the run was over.' So if you will give them to Michael Gunn, *any time to-morrow* before the evening, he will hold them for me.

"I shall be so much obliged, my dear John, if you will do this, as your name is weighty in a court of law.

"I have been suffering martyrdom here for a fortnight, but on Monday last I underwent the operation of having the stone crushed, and I am now well enough to leave Paris to-morrow *en route* for rest and quiet in the Engadine.

"Yours sincerely,

"ARTHUR SULLIVAN."

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN

My relations with Mr. Phelps were very similar to those I had with Mr. Charles Mathews. We had no long and precise agreements, but we understood and trusted each other. I never used a printed form of agreement, and never employed a lawyer for this branch of theatrical work. An exchange of short letters was all the formality I ever indulged in; sometimes even that was omitted. I often gave mere promises, and always respected them. Mr. Samuel Phelps, from 1873 to the day of his lamented death, always considered himself, more or less, engaged to me, and never thought of any public appearance without asking my opinion.

When I asked him to play "Falstaff"—an arduous part, because of the "stuffing" for an actor of threescore and ten—I did all I could to make him comfortable. Fortunately, Mr. Hermann Vezin knew and recommended an "anatomical tailor." This gentleman was clever, but expensive. He contrived a false body and stomach, inflated like a balloon, which followed the movements of the figure, and did not give the appearance of a feather-bed strapped round the body. It could have been carried by an infant. For the first time in his life he played "Falstaff" without any sense of physical exhaustion. I admired his "Falstaff," and backed my opinion. In this I differed materially from my friend and master, Charles Dickens. I was not a believer in Phelps as a great tragedian—I knew how far, with less physical force, he was an imitator of William Macready—but I was never blind to

his great merit as a comedian. He was an ideal "Wolsey," and his command of Scotch in his great performance of "Sir Pertinax Macsycophant," for a Devonshire man, was truly marvellous.

His drink while acting was beef-tea, although he was not a teetotaler. He was a very pleasant member of the Gaiety company. He spoke of the theatre as the proper size for a comedy-house, and was opposed to big theatres, like Drury Lane, where he had often played. When he first joined the Gaiety company—a company not generally associated with the so-called "legitimate drama," principally because it played and worked in it instead of talking about it—he behaved as if he had been amongst them all his life. Instead of sitting in state in his dressing-room, he passed much of his time in the green-room, and entered pleasantly into all the little amusements of the place. I instituted a comic fine of half a crown for any one heard quoting Shakespeare in any other part of the building except the stage, and once or twice Phelps was caught—not, perhaps, on the most trustworthy evidence—but he paid his fines cheerfully, and helped to drink the punch to which the money was devoted. He liked Mrs. John Wood because, in acting, with her aggressive style, "he had got something to play up to, something to wrestle with."

One result of his Gaiety engagement was that he was induced to come a little out of his domestic retirement at Canonbury. I persuaded him to become a member of the Garrick Club, which would

only have done itself honour if it had paid him the compliment of making him an honorary member. The Club may not like actors, and would probably have first blackballed Garrick (if he had been alive and an applicant) and have worshipped him in a toady fashion afterwards. Phelps was certainly worthy of a little of such cheap civility.

Mr. Forbes Robertson, who, like Mr. Weedon Grossmith, is as distinguished as a portrait painter as he is as an actor and manager, had painted a full-length picture of Phelps as "Cardinal Wolsey" during the time they were acting together at the Gaiety. I gave Mr. Robertson his price for this picture, and the Garrick members (myself amongst the number) acquired it for the Club by subscription, and it now has a position of importance amongst the old "bygones" and the living advertisers.

Mr. Arthur Cecil persuaded him to join in a Continental tour, as, with the exception of his professional visits to Berlin and Dresden, he had been a stay-at-home actor. He thought Paris was the best "stage-managed" city he had ever seen, or hoped to see (a very happy phrase), and he could not speak of the Corniche Road, between Nice and Genoa, without swearing. Though a pious man, he swore occasionally like a Cromwellian soldier.

Amongst the parts which Mr. Phelps played at the Gaiety Theatre were "Sir Peter Teazle," "Bottom the Weaver," "Jacques," "Malvolio," "Richelieu," etc. His mind was very active, and he was always ready to study a new part. He even thought

of "Bill Sikes" in *Oliver Twist*. If he had been ten or fifteen years younger, he would probably have taken a small West-End theatre, if he could have got one, and repeated the work which he carried out so nobly at Sadler's Wells. He had no conservative prejudices, and the last time he was within the walls of a playhouse was at the Gaiety Theatre. His recreation outside the theatre was fishing. He died rather unexpectedly, at the age of seventy-four, at the close of 1878, and with him went the last important link between the stage of the present and the stage of the past.

Arthur Cecil, who played with Phelps at the Gaiety, was essentially a drawing-room actor. He was almost as much a pet of "society" as the late Alfred Montgomery. He had a small and pretty talent for playing the piano and singing a few refined comic songs. He knew how to "behave," and was consequently "asked again." When Mrs. Brown Potter was making up her mind to "go on the stage," she was patronized by the Princess of Wales, and a little family dinner was given at Marlborough House to discuss her prospects. Arthur Cecil was the only theatrical guest asked to give them the benefit of his advice. The well-meant advice given her did not lead to success. As I told Mr. Pierre Lorillard in America, when he asked me about her position and its probabilities, "she appeared at the wrong time, in the wrong piece, at the wrong theatre."

Arthur Cecil's first real experience of theatrical

ARTHUR CECIL

life was gained at the Gaiety Theatre under my management. To an indolent, undecided man, independent of the theatrical profession for a living, the experience, no doubt, appeared rather rough. It was a pushing, driving management. Arthur Cecil had no repertory, and had to make himself generally useful. He was fairly well paid. He received double the salary that Mrs. Siddons received in her early days in London, and about the same as Charles Kemble received when he became an established power in the theatre. He began in opera bouffe, continued in farce, developed into Shakespeare, as "Dr. Caius" in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, learned much from Mr. Samuel Phelps, and more from Mrs. John Wood ("Ma," as he used to call her), was pitchforked into "Sir Harcourt Courtley," "Sir Peter Teazle," "Touchstone," and "Tony Lumpkin," playing with the Kendals and the best people, but being denied three months' rehearsals for every new part—new to him, but not new to an actor of experience. I had a bad attack of the *Plica Napoleonica* at that time, and, like Ducrow with his horses, was striding across three theatres. Arthur Cecil's "Tony Lumpkin" was a most gentlemanly performance—not quite what Goldsmith meant—but no matter. It was Anthony Lumpkin, Esq., J.P., M.P., a good average county member, with a dash of the Vestryman and the London County Councillor.

Arthur never looked like an actor. When he complained to his old friend and former manager,

German Reed, of the nigger-driving system of management at the Gaiety, he got little sympathy, and was told that a year of such work was just what he wanted. He was a placid, good-tempered fellow, living a solitary life, with no family cares nor troubles. He was like the man described by Sutton, the American stump orator and humorist. It would have been difficult to find any one with such a "wonderful influence over food." The moment he saw a pie on a table—he was "very partial" to pies—that pie became his. The hour might be two in the afternoon or two in the morning, it made no difference to him—or the pie. I called him "Gorgibuster," and he always called me "Mr. Manager." His memory will long live at his favourite clubs—the Garrick and the Beefsteak. "Society" has a short memory, and has probably forgotten him already. He was meant by nature for a pet curate or a trusted family doctor.

Even Shakespeare could not be performed without a protest from certain members of the public, and a letter on "Stage Decencies," signed "C.," was inserted in the *Daily News* of January 28th, 1875.

The letter was followed by a leader. I quote the letter :—

"As the principle now seems to be generally and cheerfully acknowledged that a certain standard of decency ought to be enforced by our officials on our behalf in the theatres, it seems reasonable to ask whether we ought still to be compelled to listen to language which, familiar and endured in the days of

Elizabeth, sounds coarse and even shameful in our ears? The other night I went to one of the best of our theatres where a comedy of Shakespeare's is now being performed, and the playbills of which announce that 'all offensive expressions' have been carefully expunged from the text. I found that many of the coarsest words of Shakespeare's day—words which no man now would speak in a private company of men—were delivered from the stage for the benefit of an audience of men, women, and children. I cannot see how any real respect for Shakespeare's text calls for this severe trial upon decent ears. Rather do I think that a true respect for his genius would in a theatrical representation omit words which are absolutely superfluous to its purposes, and which assuredly, were Shakespeare alive now, he never would have written.

"C."

I was defended, in company with Shakespeare, by another correspondent—"B."—and, of course, I defended myself in the following communication of February 3rd, 1875:—

"I am much obliged to your correspondent 'B.' for bearing testimony to the strict propriety of the performance of the *Merry Wives of Windsor* at the Gaiety Theatre, but as his visit was subsequent to the appearance of 'C.'s' letter in your columns it might perhaps be inferred that I have simply been taught decency by your former correspondent; allow me, therefore, to assure 'B.' and the public that no change whatever has been made. Mr.

Phelps and the other distinguished performers associated with him will bear me out in stating that 'B.' heard precisely the same words that were heard by 'C.' As far as regards our official censor, I have been left—as my friend the manager of the Lyceum is left—free to allow, if I please, every word of the text to be uttered on the stage. But I have of my own motive honestly done my best to expunge offensive expressions in the very spirit of your excellent leading article of Friday last. I cannot undertake to oblige your first correspondent by converting Shakespeare into pap for the benefit of 'children'; but I may say that, among the crowded audiences that assemble here every night, I have observed many young folks who appear to be very merry at the sight of the fat knight rolled in the 'buck-basket,' or disguised in the skin and antlers among the little fairies around Herne's Oak. I will undertake that if people will only refrain from putting wicked notions into the little dears' heads, it will never occur to them that their parents and friends have done any wrong in taking them to see the *Merry Wives of Windsor*."

The struggle to get rid of the Ash Wednesday restriction as to dramatic performances on that day in London was now coming to a head. I began this agitation even before I became a manager, as I did also a movement to give the music-halls dramatic privileges, and I never lost an opportunity of pushing my free-trade views in newspaper and magazine articles, and public speeches. While I

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, *Clown*

COLONEL BATEMAN, *Pantaloon*

had three theatres under my control, and consequently a very large company, I thought the opportunity too good to be lost, and drew up the following "protest," which was readily signed and published :—

ASH WEDNESDAY IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

To the Lord Chamberlain.

My Lord,

I beg to forward your Lordship a printed copy of a paper signed by the members of my companies protesting against the compulsory closing of certain theatres on Ash Wednesday, and I also enclose copies of a few letters received by me which show the absurd exemptions to the Ash Wednesday rule existing in different parts of the country. Imitating your Lordship's example on a recent occasion, when you issued a printed circular to theatrical managers, I have sent this correspondence to the press, so that the public may be in a position to judge between us. This question will probably be brought before Parliament early in the session, in connection with an attempt which will be made to remove the illegality of morning performances at concert rooms and entertainment galleries. The moment that brilliant sample of antique legislation (the 25th Geo. II. cap. 36) is brought before the House of Commons to be patched and mended, the defects of our present licensing systems will have to be discussed and remedied.

I remain, my Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

PROTEST.

We, the undersigned members of the dramatic profession and of Mr. John Hollingshead's theatrical companies, beg most emphatically to protest against the law, custom, whim, and prejudice which compel us to remain idle, and to earn nothing on Ash Wednesday, while the three millions of people, more or less, in London, not being members of the dramatic profession, and the twenty-seven millions of people, more or less

in the suburbs and throughout the country, whether members of the dramatic profession or not, are at liberty to work on that mysterious day, in any moral or immoral, active or passive way, in which they are accustomed to work throughout the year.

Signed—

SAMUEL PHELPS.
HERMAN VEZIN.
E. RIGHTON.
J. G. TAYLOR.
ROBERT SOUTAR.
ARTHUR CECIL.
JOHN MACLEAN.
— FENTON.
— BUTLER.
— BRADSHAW.
— BETTISON.
— GRESHAM.
W. BELFORD.
FORBES ROBERTSON.
MRS. JOHN WOOD.
ROSE LECLERCQ.
MISS FURTARDO.
MRS. LEIGH.
MISS WEST.
MISS BRANSCOMBE.
MEYER LUTZ, for self and eighty musicians.
W. GRIFFITHS, for self and seventy officials.
W. KNIGHT, for self and eighty men.
G. SPIKINS, for self and thirty men.
— DANIELS, for self and eighty men, boys, and girls.
JOHN D'AUBAN, for self and fifty young ladies.
MRS. BARBER, for self and fifty workpeople.
W. H. KENDAL.
JOHN RYDER.
— EDGAR.
— ROBERTS.
— MOXON.
— GARTHORNE.
— RIDLEY.
MRS. KENDAL (MISS MADGE ROBERTSON).
MRS. BUCKINGHAM WHITE.
MRS. EBURNE.
J. L. HALL.
E. COTTE.
— FORRESTER.
CHARLES LYALL.
— LEDWIDGE.
— MARSHALL.
— MARSHALL.
— COULDRICK.
— APPLEBY.
— CRUTWELL.
— GORDON.
— GROSVENOR.
— BALL.
— VACOTTI.
MISS LOSEBY.
MISS MONROE.
EMILY MUIR.
— JENNY PRATT.
— CAVALIER.
— SIMMS.

TOTAL—491 persons.

ASH WEDNESDAY

EXTRACTS FROM COUNTRY LETTERS.

Manchester.— PRINCE'S THEATRE.—Pantomime played as usual on Ash Wednesday. Seats nearly half let ten days in advance.

QUEEN'S THEATRE.—Pantomime played as usual.

THEATRE ROYAL.—Closed by stipulation in the patent. Music halls open.

Liverpool.—All the theatres and music halls open.

Newcastle.—The same.

Sheffield.—The same.

Southampton.—Theatre open. Music hall closed.

Nottingham.—THEATRE ROYAL.—Mr. Sothern and Mr. Buckstone go down from Haymarket Theatre, London, where they are not allowed to play, and perform *Our American Cousin.* Prices doubled, and seats all booked in advance.

Birmingham.—THEATRE ROYAL.—Opened on Ash Wednesday "from time immemorial." Pantomime played.

PRINCE QF WALES'S THEATRE.—Pantomime played. Plenty of music halls also opened.

Bristol.—NEW THEATRE ROYAL (licensed by magistrates) open.

OLD THEATRE ROYAL (a patent theatre) closed.

Glasgow.—Theatres open. Ash Wednesday not recognised.

Edinburgh.—Every place of amusement opened on Ash Wednesday; also on Good Friday and Christmas Day. Two special fast days are observed in Scotland, when the theatres generally give sacred concerts.

Belfast.—Theatre always open on Ash Wednesday. This year *Led Astray* will be played.

Dublin.—No legal interdict against the opening of theatres on Ash Wednesday; but they are closed because the managers think the opening would neither be "popular nor profitable."

Note.— GREENWICH THEATRE open. CRYSTAL PALACE open. Places of amusement in Chelsea and Bayswater open if they like. Places of amusement on the Surrey side of the water open. Drury Lane Theatre

(a patent house) open with the Moore and Burgess Minstrels, who are not allowed to play at St. James's Hall.

Even the sober *Athenæum* supported me in this protest (Feb. 6th, 1875), and the whole press, without an exception, were my allies.

"Mr. Hollingshead's protest to the Lord Chamberlain against the practice of compulsorily closing London theatres on Ash Wednesday, which has appeared in the daily press, should prove the means of removing a most absurd restriction. It is signed by Mr. Phelps, Mr. Herman Vezin, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, and 491 people employed in the three theatres of which Mr. Hollingshead is manager. While dramatic performances are prohibited in London, they are permitted in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, Belfast, Liverpool, Manchester, and other towns, and even in Greenwich and Chelsea. It is only difficult to conjecture what excuse can be found for maintaining so long so indefensible a restriction."

The *Daily News*, my old paper, showed its independence (as it did in the Shakespeare Indecency Case) by a few critical remarks which qualified its support, and this produced from me the following rejoinder about February 5th, 1875 :—

"With regard to the Ash Wednesday question, I am afraid you are right in describing my remonstrance as 'curt.' But it is easy for people in slip-

pers to counsel patience to the wearers of tight boots. Happily, the glorious profession to which you belong (and to which I once belonged myself) has with the happiest results long since been emancipated from the galling fetters of an official license and censorship, while it remains, as I am perfectly content, and even desirous, that the stage should remain, subject to prosecution for any violation of public decency. Your article to-day is so thoughtful and just that I should be sorry to appear wanting in gratitude; but I cannot refrain from expressing my conviction that when any official, armed with despotic powers for the purpose, shall forbid the *Daily News* to appear on Ash Wednesday, you too will be found to be 'sullen of visage and sharp of tongue.' Your feeling plea on behalf of the poor people—literally many thousands in number in London alone—whose bread is dependent on the theatres, is well founded, for the universal rule in the dramatic profession is 'no performance, no pay.' In point of fact, as you suggest, this restriction is based on no principle, moral or religious, is applied with infinite caprice, and is altogether unjust and indefensible. Yet only last year the Lord Chamberlain, as if he was contending for the very stability of the Throne, extorted from the theatres as a condition of his license a promise to remain absolutely closed on Ash Wednesday; and it is understood that he is determined to maintain this regulation intact, save the curious exception of the Christy Minstrels, who are expressly authorized to

appear at Drury Lane. The regulation, as you say, is an anachronism; but it is evident that another still more glaring 'anachronism' will have to be got rid of before common sense in these matters can have a fair chance. The 491 signatures appended to my protest only represent the members of my dramatic companies. The others are in the country, where they can do as they like."

The "official" answer from the Lord Chamberlain took the old and familiar form of *non possumus*:—

"LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S OFFICE,
"ST. JAMES'S PALACE, S.W.
"1 *February*, 1875.

"SIR,—

"I am desired by the Lord Chamberlain to acknowledge your letter without date, but received on the 30th ultimo, enclosing a Protest from the members of your company against certain theatres being closed on Ash Wednesday.

"I have to inform you in reply that, although his Lordship coincides in the opinion therein expressed as to the defects and anomalies in the present licensing system arising out of a divided jurisdiction, it is not his intention to make any alteration in the Rules acted upon by his predecessors relative to no performances being permitted in any of the Theatres licensed by him either on Sundays, Christ-

mas Day, Good Friday, or the first day of Lent, commonly called Ash Wednesday.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"SPENCER PONSONBY.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, Esq."

I had the support of many distinguished friends and statesmen, amongst the rest Lord Rosebery. He wrote that he thought it was possible to renew the agitation in the House of Lords, when Mr. Disraeli became Lord Beaconsfield, and promised to look up the papers I had furnished him with as a brief. The miscellaneous performances which I had given at the Gaiety to show the absurdity of the restriction had been stopped by authority, owing to my rather sarcastic advertisements. This was thoroughly official and logical, and foreshadowed the beginning of the end.

I still kept up my provocative advertisements. Here are two specimens :—

GAIETY.—If any public inconvenience should arise from the fact that the GAIETY is Closed To-night, Mr. HOLLINGSHEAD can only express his regret and disclaim all responsibility. To-day is called Ash-Wednesday, and the only amusements permitted are confined to a few music halls on the Surrey side of the river. A dozen provincial towns have competed for Mr. Toole's services, and this year he has selected Sheffield. The FORTY THIEVES will be played as usual TO-MORROW NIGHT.

GAIETY.—To-night the public are requested to go to the Canterbury and South London Music Halls, the only places of amusement allowed to be opened for a population of 4,000,000.—JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

OPERA COMIQUE.—To-night the public are requested to go to the Canterbury and South London Music Halls, the only places of amusement allowed to be opened for a population of four millions.—Managers, Messrs. J. Hollingshead and R. Barker.

At last, about eight years after Lord Rosebery was hopeful about Lord Beaconsfield, a Conservative Lord Chamberlain, the Earl of Lathom, struck the veto off all licenses within the area of his powers, and Ash Wednesday went the way of the old-time Passion Week.

The *Observer* had the following paragraph :—

"Mr. John Hollingshead's persistent agitation against the compulsory closing of the London Theatres on Ash Wednesday has at last triumphed. The licenses issued by the Lord Chamberlain for the year ending on the 29th September, 1886, impose no restriction as to performances on that obsolete fast-day, and accordingly Mr. Hollingshead will not need next Ash Wednesday to make his usual sarcastic announcement to the effect that 'to-night the public are requested to go to the Canterbury and South London Music Halls, the only places of amusement allowed to be opened for a population of 4,000,000.'"

I received a letter from Lord Rosebery which I might have written myself, as it embodied the sentiments I published in a letter to the *Times*. I thanked Lord Lathom for his liberality, and regretted that the Liberals, so called, with their powers and opportunities, had left the good work to be done by a Conservative Government. It was not for want of knocking and asking, but the footman who opened the door always took the form of the Nonconformist Conscience. Lord Rosebery

said, "You may well triumph, but I hope this will not make you turn Tory."

One of my announcements at this time led to a little correspondence on the copyright question. This is the announcement.

"GAIETY THEATRE.

"Mr. John Hollingshead has made the following arrangements for his next theatrical season :—

"Mr. Toole will return November 8, and play round to Easter, 1876. Previous to this, Mr. Charles Mathews will appear in a new comedy. Mr. Phelps will probably take his farewell of the stage during this season. Miss Neilson will appear in a new poetical play, founded on a work by Alfred Tennyson. Signor Rossi, the eminent Italian actor, will make his first appearance in England; and negotiations are pending with Madame Ristori to play with him. Signor Salvini has kindly offered his co-operation."

In a few days I received the following letter :—

"65, CORNHILL, *June 16th*, 1875.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, ESQ.,

"Gaiety Theatre, London.

"DEAR SIR,—

"We have received information that you are preparing to produce a poetical play, founded on a work by Alfred Tennyson, in which Miss Neilson will appear. As the proprietors of Mr. Tennyson's

copyrights we take the liberty of inquiring if this be true, and to what extent the drama proposes to adopt the words of the poem.

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY S. KING & CO.,

[LATE SMITH, ELDER & Co.]"

Having spent hundreds of pounds, and many months of valuable time, to try and protect novelists from unauthorized stage adaptation of their works, and having received the support in writing of the following ladies and gentlemen connected with literature, I confess I was a little annoyed :—

George Eliot, Anthony Trollope, Lord Lytton ("Owen Meredith"), Wilkie Collins, Tom Taylor, Charles Reade, Shirley Brooks, M. E. Braddon, Watts Phillips, Charles Mackay, Westland Marston, William Gilbert, Florence Marryat, W. S. Gilbert, Sir Charles Young, F. W. Robinson, Palgrave Simpson, Blanchard Jerrold, B. L. Farjeon, Charles Dickens (junior), Charles Gibbon, Joseph Hatton, Edward Jenkins, M.P., William Moy Thomas, etc.

My reply the same day was probably a little curt. The play was never produced, and there was no more correspondence. The law remains the same in 1898.

"GAIETY THEATRE, *June 16th*, 1875.

"GENTLEMEN,—

"I am not aware to what extent the adapter intends to use Mr. Tennyson's words, etc., but you probably know that the copyright law doesn't reach

dramatic versions of printed books. We are trying to get this law altered, though both authors and publishers seem to take very little interest in the matter.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

Rose Michel, a drama produced in March, 1875, was not a success—far from it. It came under the heading of *Spilt Milk*, which the Gaiety management never cried over. The London *Figaro*, April 21st, 1875, said: "Those who are inclined to make much of this failure may be reminded that this is about the first cropper the management has met with in the most adventurous seven years' career of new pieces that any house can show. The sudden production of *London Assurance* and the *Tempest*, when the inevitable had to be faced, was in itself quite a feat, as half the Gaiety company, including Phelps, Hermann Vezin, Arthur Cecil, Taylor, Lyall, Belford, Miss Loseby, and Mrs. Leigh, had been sent by Mr. Hollingshead to Manchester."

With the engagement of Miss Ada Cavendish I again dabbled in Shakespeare, leaving "Taste and the Musical Glasses" for after pieces. We did *Much Ado About Nothing*, according to the *Times* and *Athenæum*, more than creditably.

Early in May I imported M. Coulon's French Comic Opera company. They came with their dresses and properties, and nearly the whole repertory of the Opéra Comique in Paris. In a few

weeks we "ran through" as many works as the French subsidized theatre performs in as many years, and the English public had Boieldieu, Hérold, Adolphe Adam, Auber, Halévy, and others, with many composers of the light Italian school, brought to their doors. This company, after a week of opera bouffe in English, was followed by an English Opera company, as if to show the cosmopolitan impartiality of the management.

Mr. J. L. Toole returned from his American tour in November, 1875, and immediately took his old place at the Gaiety. He appeared in a three-act farce by Henry J. Byron, called *Tottles*, received by the press with some abuse, more contempt, and a fair share of praise. It pleased the public, I presume; any way, we did without a burlesque at Christmas, 1875–6. Mr. Toole, Miss Farren, and the general company, kept the theatre going for several months with farces, *apropos* sketches, and other trifles. Mr. Charles Mathews' return from India was duly celebrated by a season of fourteen weeks, and the Charing Cross Theatre was taken as a chapel-of-ease to use the burlesque company. Mr. Toole returned from the provinces for a very short season of two weeks, and an equally short season was devoted to the serious drama by Herman Merivale and Palgrave Simpson, called *All for Her*, founded upon Charles Dickens' Carlylean story, *The Tale of Two Cities*, which the author and Charles Fechter once made an attempt to dramatise.

CHARLES MATHEWS

The year 1876 saw Charles Mathews' last appearance at the Gaiety. Although he had been on the stage for more than forty years, he made no secret of the fact that, in spite of his great and peculiar talent, and his personal popularity, he had not found it a very lucrative profession. His attractive power as an actor was rarely disassociated from his or Madame Vestris's theatrical speculations, and the result was that what he made as a comedian he lost as a manager. He was constantly playing a game of bo-peep with the sheriff's officer. He was familiar with the inside of the historical sponging-house in (Damning and) Cursitor Street; and he was not ignorant of the interior of Lancaster Jail. Of course he was ultimately made a bankrupt, and the old frowsy court in Basinghall Street never had such a cheery morning performance as on the day of his examination. The Court was his theatre for the time being. The judge, the officials, and the gaping multitude were his willing audience, He gave yet another reading of "Affable Hawk" in the *Game of Speculation*. There was nothing of the Hawk about him, but much of Jingle and Micawber. His creditors were amused, if not paid. They were converted to a belief that debt was a brilliant joke, and not a solemn obligation. They never murmured when they were practically told that the proper function of creditors—their reason for existence—was to give credit. The judge timidly suggested, more to sustain judicial respectability than to reprove the representative of spark-

ling impecuniosity, that the hire and use of a carriage might possibly, in such a case, come under the head of extravagance. He gave the brilliant debtor a cue, and led up to an epigram—"Cabs require ready money!"

After Madame Vestris's death, Charles Mathews went to America, where he contracted a second marriage, and on his return to England with his wife and step-son (the present popular barrister, Mr. "Willie" Mathews), he attempted to revive the form of entertainment associated with his distinguished father, the "elder Mathews." What were the financial results of this experiment I am not in a position to state, but he soon gave up "entertaining" and returned to the stage, accepting an engagement under the management of Benjamin Webster, playing principally at the Olympic. Then came the tour round the world, and the farewell benefit that was given to him at Covent Garden Theatre. In connection with this benefit I received from him the following letter:—

"EDINBURGH, *November 27th*, 1869.

"MY DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,—

"What do you think? On the 31st of January I sail for Australia! There's a blow! not the only one I shall get before I arrive there.

"Now I have settled to take a Farewell Benefit at Covent Garden, on Tuesday morning, January 4th, 1870. Will you give permission to one or two of your principal people to perform for me? A

scene or a short act will do. I will write to Wigan and Toole on the subject, but of course must have your consent, which I do not doubt you will give. Wishing myself every success, I am,

"Faithfully yours,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"Please answer to 25, Pelham Crescent, Brompton, S.W.

"P.S.—Of course I should like a scene from any popular piece you may be playing with your principal people. If you can manage this, please present my best compliments to the persons concerned, and ask them to co-operate."

He went on his circular tour—a triumphal progress. He got in time to New York. In the early summer of 1872 I received a communication from him expressing a wish to play at the Gaiety Theatre on his return to England. I had had no correspondence with him or from him during his tour. The suggestion came entirely from his side, and this was the first intimation (conveyed by Mr. "Willie" Mathews) that I received. I replied that I should be delighted with such an arrangement.

I was in Liverpool in July on business, when I received a telegram early one morning, saying that he had arrived, and wished to see me the same day at four o'clock in the afternoon to make the engagement. I came to Town by the first express train I could "catch," and punctually at the appointed

time he bounded into my room at the theatre, looking certainly ten years younger than he did before he left England. We wasted very little time in settling details; no agreements were drawn up, no letters asked for or given; a mere verbal contract was entered into on both sides. He asked for a third of the gross receipts; I agreed to his proposal. I made a memorandum in a diary, and we both started off in different directions—he to Baden-Baden and I to Vienna—the same night. We never saw and heard very little from each other, till the beginning of October, and on the 7th of that month he made his re-appearance in England, after his long absence, at the Gaiety Theatre in *A Curious Case* and *The Critic*. In the *Curious Case* he played his original part of "Mr. Twiggleton"—a second "Paul Pry," and he was supported by Miss Fanny Brough, Mr. Bishop, and others. *The Critic* was thus cast, Charles Mathews playing "Puff" and "Sir Fretful Plagiary"; "Dangle," Mr. Teesdale; "Sneer," Mr. J. Maclean; "Governor of Tilbury Fort," Mr. Crutwell; "Under Prompter," Mr. Trafford; "Lord Burleigh," Mr. Daniels; "Earl of Leicester," Mr. Butler; "Sir Walter Raleigh," Mr. Bishop; "Sir C. Hatton," Mr. Petre; "Master of the Horse," Mr. Dalton; "Beefeater," Mr. R. Soutar; "Don Ferolo Whiskerandos," Mr. E. W. Royce; "Mrs. Dangle," Miss L. Wilson; "Nieces," Miss Harrison and Miss Egerton; "Confidante," Mrs. H. Leigh; and "Tilburina," Miss Tremaine. This, with two or three exceptions, was

CHARLES MATHEWS

not a great, but a good working cast, and the piece was probably never better played. It was played afterwards, from time to time, with more prominent names in the bill, notably for benefits; but the "names," as usual, wanted to make too much of their parts, and further helped to spoil a piece which has always been a favourite plaything of the dramatic profession.

Charles Mathews's reception on that night was the most enthusiastic burst of feeling I ever witnessed within the walls of a theatre. Apart from my own extensive experience, I cannot imagine any reception that could surpass, or probably equal it. It was not given to a young, attractive, clever, and popular woman, but to an elderly gentleman on the verge of seventy. The one who seemed the least moved by it was the chief actor.

He played for ten weeks, going through many of his favourite parts, *Used Up*, *Married for Money*, *Cool as a Cucumber*, *Game of Speculation*, etc., and though the bulk of the company were sent to the country, as he required very few to support him, the receipts amounted to nearly £1,000 a week.

His performances, amidst a chorus of praise, gave rise to a few critical comments, which he was quite able and willing to answer. The *Game of Speculation* caused a little newspaper controversy, and (Dec. 8th, 1872) he wrote the following interesting and exhaustive letter-article in the *Observer* :—

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"DE BALZAC'S *MERCADET.*

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'OBSERVER.'

"SIR,—

"It is rather late in the day to have to enter into a discussion upon the *Game of Speculation*, a play which has enjoyed the favour of the public for more than twenty years, and is as much relished now as it was on its original production; but as the author of *Players of our Day* has taken me to task for my mode of performing the principal character, I feel called upon to make some reply to his remarks.

"In the first place I may state that I never professed to represent Balzac's *Mercadet.* I merely produced an English play adapted from it, and without caring in any way for the French original, beyond making it the vehicle for an amusing and caustic picture of the doings of the Stock Exchange, exhibiting the clever ruses of an unscrupulous schemer in his efforts to outwit his fellow speculators. It is, therefore, no greater crime to have misrepresented Balzac's 'idea' (had I done so) than to have altered and adapted the pieces of Octave Feuillet, Dumas, Sardou, and others, as has so often been done, transferring the scenes from France to England, and fitting them to the manners and tastes of English audiences. But, setting this on one side, I claim to assert that I have *not* mistaken Balzac's 'idea'—that the view I take of his *Mercadet* is the right one; and that, if I have

'taken care to avoid anything tragic in my view of the character,' I have done so advisedly; for I defy the writer of *Players of our Day*, or any one else, to show the slightest pretence that Balzac has afforded for such a view being taken of his hero. The writer of *Our Players* says, speaking of the *Game of Speculation*: 'This English conception is utterly foreign to the whole meaning of the piece. No more tragic situation could be conceived than that of 'Mercadet.' We should smile to think of Mr. Charles Mathews pourtraying such a character. Yet this is Balzac's *Mercadet.* This is the 'Mercadet of Got'—and the great French actors—this is the tradition of the great Théâtre Français, where they religiously preserve the author's traditions.' Now, this I beg distinctly to say is *not* Balzac's *Mercadet.* That it may be the 'Mercadet of Got' I don't dispute, but that it is the *Mercadet* of the great French actors I deny. It was not the view of the only other actor who ever played it in Paris, M. Geoffroy, the original at the Gymnase, who, so far from taking a lachrymose view of the character, made it an off-hand Robert Macaire; and it is *not* the 'tradition of the great Théâtre Français, where they religiously preserve the author's traditions.' Before people write on subjects they know nothing about, they should make themselves acquainted with the facts they are ignorant of. Is the gentleman who makes these assertions aware that the 'great Théâtre Français' *refused* the piece of de Balzac?—that it never was acted there at all till some twenty years

after the author's death and its production at the Gymnase, and that consequently it could not have been in possession of any of his traditions? Is he aware that before it could be presented to the public the posthumous work was confided to the hands of M. d'Ennery, who, with consummate skill, put it into an actable shape, reduced it to three acts, remodelled the plot, and wrote a considerable quantity of the dialogue? If so, he is only justified in asserting that this was the 'Mercadet of Got,' but not that it was the 'Mercadet of Got'; and if any traditions are religiously preserved at the Français, they must be the traditions of the Gymnase, where the piece was originally played a year after Balzac's death, and where the part of 'Mercadet' was represented by Geoffroy in a style diametrically opposite to that of Got.

"I feel perfectly convinced of two things—first, that the author of *Our Players* never saw the *Game of Speculation* at all; and next that he never read Balzac's original five-act play as published in his works (*'entièrement conforme au manuscrit de l'auteur'*), or even d'Ennery's version, pronounced by Théophile Gautier a *'pièce arrangée avec tant de tact et d'habileté.'* He has chosen to think the part unsuited to 'the "touch-and-go" style of a rattling comedian,' and the 'great play of Balzac converted into a gay, farcical piece of comedy, glided over by the pleasant and ever juvenile Charles,' settling in his own mind that, of course, my mode of playing it *must* be thoroughly unlike what it ought to be,

because my usual style is unsuited to it. Perhaps, if he would take the trouble to read the *three* pieces, he would find that, so far from the original being 'pared down' to suit my 'touch-and-go' style, not a word of the piece, as acted at the Gymnase, has been lost, and that much has been added to fit it to the English stage. He says: 'This play is indeed a monument of English dulness and bad taste. The treatment of Balzac's play is most discreditable. Who that sees the glib, farcical, and even buffooning *Game of Speculation* rattled through by the ingenious Charles would suppose that the original was a play that pierced to what was the deepest tragic interest?' Who would, indeed! 'After seeing the piece at the Français, with Got as the speculator, we come away impressed, *serious*, and delighted.' Rather a novel result of a witty comedy! 'The English *Game of Speculation* is farcical, light, trifling, and to those who have seen the masterly original a simple profanation.' But no one *has* seen the masterly original. The masterly original was a bad, undramatic, unpresentable work, full of admirable writing and worldly satire, but unskilfully put together, and utterly useless for the purposes of the stage.

"As to the tragic view of the 'idea,' it is simply ridiculous. M. Got is one of the most accomplished actors on the French stage, and has no greater admirer than myself; but if he takes a 'tragic view' of the character of 'Mercadet,' and plays it with 'pathos,' in my humble opinion M. Got has for once

made a mistake. 'Mercadet' is depicted by Balzac as a hard, sarcastic man of the world, stopping at no baseness, revelling in falsehood and deceit, sacrificing the happiness of his own daughter to carry out his impositions, and with but one object throughout the piece, viz., that of cheating and outwitting all with whom he has to deal. Why, the very name of the original play was *Le Faiseur*, a man scheming morning, noon, and night to 'do' his fellow-creatures, condescending to extract money even from his cook-wench, and shrinking from no means, however dishonest, to effect his ends. Fancy such a man being pourtrayed from a 'tragic' point of view! Fancy a sharp, unscrupulous stockjobber crying over the cheat he is carrying on, spreading dishonest reports to bring about a rise, and crying over the necessity for having to do so in order to fill his pockets with his friend's money! Fancy Jeremy Diddler crying while endeavouring to 'do' Sam the waiter out of his tenpence! It is too absurd. It is true that in the original comedy he brings tears into play in order to extract sympathy from the man he is cheating, but his 'asides' all the time as he watches the effect he is producing clearly show that his pathos is only simulated, and his satisfaction when successful in securing the money he has worked for is too marked to admit of the supposition that he is the victim of remorse. How does the gentleman who has 'studied his Balzac conscientiously,' reconcile Mercadet's side speeches, while wiping the crocodile tears from his

eyes, 'I shall bring him to it'—'He's yielding'—'This will do it'—'I shall have his money'—with 'the tragic view' of the situation? In his frantic and loud cry to bring in his wife and daughter of 'I'm in despair—I shall blow out my brains,' adding aside with a smile as they enter, 'They heard me'; followed by his sneering remarks upon his daughter's real burst of feeling, 'What touching accents—I was not half as natural—she's magnificent!' and so on. Where is the tragic undercurrent that it is sought to attribute to him—the pathos that is to send the spectator home 'impressed and serious'?

"I recommend the author of *Players of our Day* to set himself three tasks—first, to read the original comedy, as written by Balzac, and point out, if he can, a single instance of real pathos or of tragedy in the character of 'Mercadet' from beginning to end; secondly, to read the play as acted, and compare it line by line with the English version, and say where the one differs from the other; and, thirdly, to come and see the *Game of Speculation* (I hope he will secure a comfortable stall, as that may materially influence his judgment), and point out the 'discreditable buffoonery' indulged in by the 'ingenious Charles.'

"In his *Players of our Day* my critic has been kind enough to deny me the slightest rank in my profession, and takes the trouble to explain that I am now enjoying 'the usual popularity which an absence in America *always* secures, even if histrionic merit be absent.' If that be really *always* the case,

I wonder he does not try the experiment, and thus secure a popularity for his theatrical criticisms which at present they somewhat lack. For my own part (but, then, I speak selfishly), I sincerely declare that while he writes in his present strain, his 'absence in America' would give me more satisfaction than his return home.

"Your obedient servant,

"CHARLES J. MATHEWS."

The scene painted at the Gaiety as a background to *The Liar* (Corneille's *Menteur*) was a view of old St. James's Park—the "Mall"—with old Buckingham House in the distance.

"Ah," said Mathews, "when that old house was being pulled down, and the plans for the present Buckingham Palace were being prepared, I was employed upon them as an articled clerk in Nash the architect's office—the creator of Regent Street."

His second engagement, after a long country tour,—for he hated to be idle,—was for five weeks in the summer of 1873, followed by five weeks in the autumn of the same year, when he played *The Liar*, *Patter* v. *Clatter*, *Used-Up*, *Mr. Gatherwool*, *Married for Money*, *£1,000 a Year*, *Cool as a Cucumber*, *Aggravating Sam*, and *Little Toddlekins*.

This engagement was nearly as successful as the first one.

I have mentioned the combination performance in which he rather unwillingly joined with Phelps

and Toole at the close of 1873. In the summer of 1874 he appeared again at the Gaiety for seven weeks, playing old material, *Married for Money*, *The Critic*, *Mr. Gatherwool*, *Used-Up*, *The Nice Firm* (in conjunction with Mr. Arthur Cecil), *Game of Speculation*, *Cool as a Cucumber*, and *Patter* v. *Clatter*. *Patter* v. *Clatter* was his own concoction, but *Cool as a Cucumber* being an original production, written by Mr. Blanchard Jerrold, and one calculated to show his fascinating impudence on the stage, was the piece he translated into French, under the title of *L'Anglais Timide*, and represented in Paris. The task was no doubt like taking coals to Newcastle, but the French public who saw him never saw a better comedian.

This was a good engagement, though not quite so good as the previous ones. He now went to the country for more than a year, and prepared himself for his next engagement by writing a new piece called *My Awful Dad*. He was very reticent about the original source of this comedy, and wrote the following letter to *The Times*, September 15th, 1875:—

"'LE PÈRE PRODIGUE.'

"TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE TIMES.'

"SIR,—

"In your very kind notice of my new piece, for which I return you many thanks, you pay a compliment to the present state of society which I am afraid is not altogether deserved. You seem

to imply that there is only one *Père Prodigue* in the world. Would that it were so, and I for one should greatly rejoice, 'in a moral way,' to believe it. But though *My Awful Dad* is founded on the same idea as the well-known French comedy you mention, I can assure you he is another Dad entirely. My piece is not taken from that play, nor does it in any way resemble it.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"C. J. MATHEWS.

"GAIETY THEATRE,
"*September* 15."

He made his first appearance in this piece September 13th, 1875, and played it with immense success for eight weeks. The principals were :—

ADONIS EVERGREEN ...	...	Mr. CHARLES MATHEWS
PRINCE KOTCHIKOOF	...	... Mr. DE BELLEVILLE
DICK EVERGREEN ...	...	... Mr. E. W. ROYCE
HUMPHREY LOVEKIN ...	...	... Mr. J. MACLEAN
Mrs. BIGGS	...	... Mrs. H. LEIGH
MATILDA WEDDAGAIN	...	Miss LOUISE HENDERSON
EMMA MARIGOLD ...	...	... Mdlle. CAMILLE

supported by Messrs. Fawcett, Trafford, Edwards, W. H. Leigh, Miss Laroche, and Miss Cavalier.

It was during this performance that Mr. Gladstone spent an evening on the Gaiety stage, being very much interested in all the machinery and business. His companion was Sir Richard Quain. He saw the theatre at one of its comparatively quiet moments, but I fancy he went away with the

impression that the trade of amusing the public was not quite such an "idle trade" as many people imagine.

To show that even in Charles Mathews' case a new play has a "drawing power," I made out the following figure analysis of the four engagements :—

1872					
60 nights.	Nightly average	£156	6	$7\frac{1}{2}$
1873					
30 nights.	,, ,,	£136	4	$2\frac{3}{4}$
1874					
42 nights.	,, ,,	£106	19	$7\frac{1}{2}$
1875					
48 nights.	,, ,,	£152	18	$3\frac{1}{4}$
Total nightly average on 180 nights ...	...	£140	0	3

The low average of 1874 evidently depressed Charles Mathews, and when he came back in 1875 he elected to take a certain payment of £100 a week, rather than speculate in a share of the receipts. He lost money by this decision, but he never grumbled.

During this 1875 engagement he was prevailed upon to overcome a strong prejudice he had against morning performances. He appeared at two *matinées* during the eight weeks, and at one special *matinée* before his departure for India.

At the special *matinée* (a benefit performance) he made the following speech :—

"Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have promised a few

words, and I am here to redeem my promise. An actor has always this advantage—he not only promises but performs. 'A few words' is a vague expression. The few words of some men would fill a column, while those of others would scarcely make a paragraph. Mine are of the latter description. I am a man of few words, and never trouble you with them except on particular occasions—when I really have something particular to say—and this is one of them. Of course the nature of the few words depends upon the circumstances. A few words with one's sweetheart are worth a week's talk with one's mother-in-law, and when a man has a few words with his wife—however much he may love her—the consequences are anything but agreeable. Now, a few words at parting are naturally expected to be of a lachrymose character; but I am not sentimental, nor given to the melting mood, so you will excuse the non-appearance of my white handkerchief. As I have observed, I never say a few words except when I am going away, but as I am always going away you may think that I am always saying a few words. But then I am always coming back again, and I hope this will be no exception to the rule, so there really is no occasion for tears on either side. I am only going on a little pleasure trip. The weather here is very far from tempting, and I can't do better than step out of it. A severe winter is predicted, so I avail myself of the opportunity of avoiding it, and, as the Major would say, of 'enjoying my Indian

summer.' It is a trip I have long contemplated. Three years ago I had nearly accomplished it, and got as far as Ceylon, but my foot slipped and I drifted over to Australia. I then determined to take India on my way back, but the wind shifted, and I found myself in the Sandwich Islands. This however I did not regret, for I there passed one of the most memorable evenings of my life. I played 'by command and in the presence of his Majesty Hame-hame-ha, the fifth King of the Cannibal Islands,' before an audience of Kanakas—black gentlemen who a few years ago would have supped off me with pleasure, and who find it difficult even now to resist the occasional delicacy of a fat baby on the sly. If all goes well, I calculate upon reaching Calcutta at last, and shall probably play there about Christmas time, under the patronage of the Rajah Ram Jam Cuttery Poo, or the lovely Begum Catty Fatty Bunkum Hoy, and on my return you may expect to see me riding up to the stage door of the Gaiety on my favourite elephant. Where my next trip may be is not yet settled. I am balancing between a provincial tour to the Arctic regions and to the interior of Africa, but have to wait till the theatres there have opened for their regular winter season. However, before I go you shall as usual have another few words, so that you may be kept informed of my movements. I think I see before me several well-known faces, constant attendants, who have listened to a number of a few words on

numerous occasions. I hope I do not misinterpret them. There is a story told of a man who went every night to see Van Amburgh put his head in the lion's mouth, in order that he might be sure of not missing the moment when it would be bitten off. Who knows but that the same sort of feeling may exist with regard to my few words, and that the hope that they may be my last may animate the listener? If so, I shall try and baulk his morbid desire, and do my best to outlast him. I have beaten him so far, and will make a struggle for it still. I have enjoyed the favour of the public for forty years, and have grown all the stronger for its support. Who knows how long I may yet enjoy it? At all events, I have had the gratification of finding that even after so long a period, and notwithstanding the growth of so many young and bright intellects around me, I am still able to afford the same amusement that I did nearly half a century ago, and that I am permitted not only to play my old parts to the satisfaction of the audience, but have been allowed to write and act a new one, meeting with even more than my old success. I shall carry the pleasant remembrance with me wherever I go, and I shall hope to return and find you all as hearty and kind as ever. I have just concluded not only a most successful but a most delightful engagement, petted by the genial manager and his cordial company, and have nothing but thanks to bestow on all my friends before and behind the curtain. These are my few words,

ladies and gentlemen, and I trust they are enough ; at any rate they are sincere, and I can say no more. I wish you all health and happiness (including myself), and look forward with hope and pleasure to our next merry meeting."

This Indian engagement was a great social if not a financial triumph, and on his return he reopened at the Gaiety in *My Awful Dad* and *Cool as a Cucumber* on Monday, April 17th, 1876, playing for fourteen weeks.

The close of that year and the early part of 1877 he spent, as usual, working in the country, and on his return to town, finding I could not take him in at the Gaiety, owing to a season of French plays, he went to the Opéra Comique, then under my management, and played for nine weeks in *My Awful Dad*, *The Liar*, *The Cosy Couple*, etc. This was his last engagement in London. On Saturday night, June 7th, 1877, he made his last appearance on the boards of a London theatre.

The result of these various engagements spread over six years were highly satisfactory to both of us. The gross receipts were nearly £40,000, out of which he received nearly £10,000 for playing about 354 times, or nearly £30 a performance. Long as he had been on the stage, he told me this was the first money he had ever really earned and kept, as during the greater part of his career (as I have said before) he was a manager as well as an actor, and what he made on the stage always went in management and financial expedients. His

second wife, Mrs. "Charlie," did not teach him prudence: she did better—she became his banker. And yet he was a careful man in keeping records, and an indefatigable worker. His production of *The Game of Speculation* in three days was a proof of the latter quality.

The number of the pieces he wrote, adapted, and played in is shown in the following extraordinary list which he prepared himself in 1875 for the *Saturday Programme*, and ultimately printed in the Gaiety programme. The *w* means written or adapted, and the *c* means the principal parts created by the author and actor :—

NINE ACTS.—Strange History *c.*

EIGHT ACTS.—Chain of Events *w—c.*

FIVE ACTS.—Belle's Stratagem. Bubbles of the Day *c.* Bold Stroke for a Wife. Busy Body. Confederacy. Court and City *c.* Cure for the Headache. Double Gallant. Fox Chase. John Bull. Irish Heiress *c.* Know Your Own Mind. London Assurance *c.* My Lord and My Lady *c.* Merry Wives of Windsor. Moonshine *c.* Old Maids *c.* Old Heads and Young Hearts *c.* Othello. Rivals. Rule a Wife and have a Wife. Road to Ruin. Secrets worth Knowing. Spanish Curate. Savannah *w—c.* School for Scandal. Time Works Wonders *c.* Twelfth Night. Wives as they Were. Way of the World.

THREE ACTS.—Belle's Stratagem. Busy Body. Black Book. Black Domino *w—c.* Cure for the Heartache. Clarissa Harlowe *c.* Contested Election *c.* Dangerous Friend *c.* Day of Reckoning *c.* Dead for a Ducat *w.* Everybody's Friend *c.* Faces in the Fire *c.* From Grave to Gay *c.* Game of Speculation *c.* How will they get out of it *c.* Know your own mind. Lawyers *c.* Lessons in Love *c.* Lord of the Manor *c.* Love's Telegraph *c.* Lady in Difficulties *c.* Little Devil *c.* Married for Money *w—c.* Milliner to the King *w—c.* Match for a

King *w—c.* Overland Route *c.* Paul Pry. Soft Sex *w—c.* Silken Fetters *c.* Sibylla *c.* Silver Lining *c.* Tale of a Cat *c.* Woman of the World *c.* What will the World say *c.*

Two Acts.—Aggravating Sam *w—c.* Alive and Merry *c.* Adventures of a Billet Doux *c.* Baronet *c.* Bachelor of Arts *w—c.* Bachelor's Wife *c.* Before Breakfast. Beggars' Opera *c.* Beauty and the Beast. Barrack Room. Curious Case *c.* Court Favour *c.* Cymon and Iphigenia *c.* Court Beauties. Charles 12th. Critic. Carlo *w—c.* Country Squire. Court Jester *w.* Dream of the Future *c.* Don't be Frightened *c.* Duel. Dying for a Kiss *c.* Follies of a Night *c.* Free and Easy. Fashionable Arrivals *c.* Golden Fleece *c.* Grist to the Mill *c.* Guardians Outwitted. Happy Family *c.* Husband of my Wife *c.* Impudent Puppy *w—c.* King of the Frogs *c.* King Charming. Kill him Again *w—c.* Light Dragoons *c.* Liar. My Heart's Idol *c.* My Wife's Mother *w.* Mysterious Lady *c.* Not a Bad Judge *c.* Naval Engagements *c.* Old and Young Stagers *c.* Puss in Boots *c.* Pong Wong *w.* Rencontre. Riquet with the Tuft *c.* Rape of the Lock *c.* Serve him Right *w—c.* Sleeping Beauty *c.* Seven Champions *c.* Striking Likenesses *w.* Take that Girl away *w—c.* Too Late for Dinner. Two Figaros *c.* Those Dear Blacks. Tutor's Assistant *c.* Theseus and Ariadne. Used Up *c.* United Service *c.* White Hood *c.* Wrong Man *c.* Who Killed Cock Robin *w—c.* Who's your Friend *c.* Woodcock's Little Game *c.* White Milliner. Youthful Queen.

One Act.—Appeal to the Public *c.* Antony and Cleopatra *c.* Anything for a Change *c.* Astounding Phenomena *c.* Brother Ben *c.* Box and Cox. Barber Bravo *c.* Bull in a China shop *c.* Cool as a Cucumber *c.* Captain of the Watch *c.* Charming Widow *c.* Cousin German *w—c.* Chaos is Come Again. Comical Countess *c.* Cosy Couple *c.* Cherry and Blue *w—c.* Commencement of a Bad Farce *c.* Delicate Ground *c.* Drama's Levee *c.* Drama at Home *c.* Dowager *w—c.* Dreamer *c.* Deaf Lover. Done on Both Sides *c.* Drop the Curtain *c.* Day Well Spent. Eton Boy *c.* Fast Man *c.* Fast Train *c.* Faust *c.* Faint Heart never won Fair Lady *c.* First Floor. Give a Dog an Ill Name *c.* Great Gun Trick *c.* Gentleman Opposite *c.*

He would be an Actor *w—c.* How to make Home Happy *c.* Humpbacked Lover *w—c.* Hold your Tongue *c.* Handsome Husband *c.* House Room. Hasty Conclusion *c.* His Excellency *w—c.* I will have an Uncle *c.* If I had a £1,000 a year *c.* Little Toddlekins *w—c.* Late Lamented *c.* Lying made Easy. Loan of a Lover. Locomotion. Ladder of Love *c.* My Mother's Maid *w—c.* Mathews and Co. *w—c.* Methinks I see my Father *w—c.* Mr. Gatherwool *c.* My usual Luck *w—c.* Nice Form *c.* Novelty Fair *c.* News from China *c.* Number 1 Round the Corner *c.* Nothing to Wear *w—c.* One Hour *c.* Original. Only a Clod *c.* Olympic Revels. One too many for him *c.* Patter versus Clatter *w—c.* Paul Pry married and settled *w—c.* Practical Man *c.* Phenomenon in a Smock Frock *c.* Perfection. Peggy Green. Pyramus and Thisbe *w.* Ringdoves *w—c.* Romantic Idea *c.* I have you directly *c.* Sentinel *c.* Somebody Else *c.* Speaking Likeness *c.* Sovereign Remedy *c.* Trying It On *c.* Three and the Deuce. Taking by Storm *c.* Twenty Minutes with a Tiger *c.* Two in the Morning *w—c.* Two can play at that Game. Too kind by Half *w—c.* Wolf and the Lamb *w—c.* Wanted a She-Wolf *c.* Why did you die *w—c.* Who Speaks First *c.* Why don't you Marry. You're Another *w—c.* You can't Marry your Grandmother *c.*

[To this long list has to be added *My Awful Dad* (two acts) written by the actor and the principal part created by the actor.]

As I have recorded in my autobiography, and have much pleasure in repeating, in dealing with Charles Mathews, I was dealing with a man of taste and education. He was a good amateur artist, painting both in oil and water colours; he had a good fancy and judgment for collecting prints, especially portraits, which he always had framed without a white margin. He used them chiefly to

line the walls of his staircase. He spoke Italian fluently, and had acted privately in that language at Florence. He was a good scene painter. His French, if a little pedantic, carried him successfully through a number of *Anglais Timide* representations in Paris with critical approval. His knowledge of the world was extensive and varied; he had mixed in the best society, abroad and at home; he knew and appreciated the best Italian and French cookery; he could pick out the good from the bad in wines like *Chambertin* with the yellow seal, *Romanée Conti*, and *Mouton Rothschild*, but he had one singular defect of palate which he admitted, but could not explain. He was a smoker, and he could not tell the difference between a penny cigar and one that cost a couple of shillings.

His acting was something that was born and died with him. It was the perfection of what appeared to be unstudied ease and spontaneous and rapid brilliance. There must have been art in it —much and elaborate art—but no microscopic critic could discover it. It attained Horace's standard of excellence—it was the perfection of concealment. Whatever part he played, the gentleman shone through it, and his wildest impudence would have delighted an archbishop. It was theatrical champagne of a rare quality and probably (though I sincerely hope not) of an extinct vintage.

As a story-teller and humorist he was nearly unequalled. His anecdotes would fill a volume—a volume that would light up a thousand bookstalls.

He was a brilliant speaker, and though his speeches, like most theatrical and some political speeches, were evidently carefully prepared, they were always delivered without effort. The cleverest thing of the kind was his proposal of his own health when he took the chair at a public theatrical dinner. As a private letter-writer he was as witty as he was charming. His letters, if collected, would become literature—the literature of Charles Lamb and old Montaigne. As a public letter-writer, either in French or English, he had the instinct of the born journalist. His stories were often told by himself against himself, but with the enjoyment of the true humorist.

My business with Charles Mathews, as I have said before, what little business I had, was pleasure. There was no fuss, no squabbling, and no agreements. He took my word and I took his, and no engagement during my first ten years of management, apart from the question of profit and loss, ever gave me more personal gratification.

He died at the Queen's Hotel, Manchester, June 24th, 1878, at the age of seventy-five. He was nearly seventy when he first came to the Gaiety Theatre.

CHAPTER VIII

Gaiety Burlesque

ON Saturday night, August 26th, 1876, nearly eight years after the theatre opened, I organized a new burlesque company which strengthened what remained of the old one. I took openly and avowedly to my managerial arms that Gaiety burlesque which had long been the "Aunt Sally" of the critical press. My fashionable neighbour, the *Morning Post*, might have printed the following announcement in the most interesting part of its advertising columns:—

MARRIAGE.—At the Temple of St. Thespis the Martyr, Strand, by Royal license, John Hollingshead, of the Gaiety Theatre, London, late Dramatic Censor of the *Daily News*, *The London Review*, *Punch*, etc., and late Stage Director of the Alhambra, Leicester Square, to Sarah, widow of the late Bartlemy Cockshy, Esq., of Camberwell and Stepney Greens. No Fees.

The Red Rag was mounted on the flagstaff, and the Critical Bulls were encouraged to "come on." Many of them did come on. "Aunt Sally," in her new clothes (and the bulls), did a roaring business.

Once upon a time, not many years ago, when Planché was not forgotten, when Frank Talfourd and Robert Brough had not long been dead, and Byron, Burnand, and Reece were turning out work, sometimes machine-made, but founded on stories with a backbone, and therefore presenting something a little more coherent on the stage than a music-hall entertainment without drink, or a smoking concert without tobacco, it was customary for a few superfine critics to announce periodically that burlesque was dead—dead as a stage-door nail. These mistaken, but doubtless sincere, writers sometimes, in their critical evolutions, resembled dogs running round in vain efforts to catch their own tails; sometimes children squirting against the Falls of Niagara; sometimes the "talented Cocksure family" in their celebrated ground and lofty performance; and sometimes a feeble tub-thumping beadle trying to put out the fires of hell with a broken-down parish engine. The prophecies of these writers—who were not paid for prophecy, even if they possessed that divine gift—were always falsified, and burlesque, such as it was, arose from the grave kindly provided for it, and lived a new and muscular life. This critical *rabies*, which never led those who suffered from it to bite burlesque in long clothes at the Savoy, but only burlesque in short clothes at the Gaiety, ceased when burlesque, so-called, retired for a time, and gave place to that composite, go-as-you-please production — that Burletta-*cum*-Vaudeville — *Café-*

Chantant mixture, which has sometimes been dignified with the name of "musical comedy."

I use the term Burletta in this connexion, not in any spirit of contempt, but with the utmost respect and reverence. Having read Théophile Gautier, I can even put on airs of learning on the subject. I will offer a translation :—The Burlesque style, which Scarron used with such skill, though he can hardly claim to have invented it, has had its partisans and detractors. The word Burlesque itself is not very ancient. It was not known in France or England before 1640 or 1650. Sarrazia, according to Ménage, is the first who used it in France, where it was known by the term "grotesque." The etymology of "grotesque" is *grutta*—from which we get the term "grotto"—a name given to ancient chambers discovered by excavations, the walls of which were covered with an odd mixture representing animals, plants, and architectural ornaments. "Burlesque" comes from the Italian *Burla*, which signifies a joke, or a mockery, and from which the Italians derive the words *Burlesco* and *Burlare*, adopted and modified in English in the term *Burletta*. *Burla*, though used as Italian in Italy, is really a Castilian term. In Spain, certain hidden jets of water, which spring up suddenly under the feet of unsuspicious passers-by, are called *Burladores*. The Comedy of *Tirso de Molina*, which served as a model for the *Don Juan* of Molière, is named *El Burlador de Sevilla*.

Burletta is a term that has done much and means

much, and that would cover most things if our modern audiences would only understand it, and accept its broad and comprehensive meaning. It is a word that won many a battle in the long and obstinate fight between the vicious rights of the Chartered Theatrical monopolists on one side—the dogs-in-the-manger who would not play Shakespeare themselves or allow any one else to play him—and the champions of the people's legitimate amusements on the other. It was the name that saved the proprietors and managers of the Lyceum—Henry Irving's Lyceum—from fine and imprisonment, when they committed the heinous crime of playing *Macbeth*, and had to break the play up into a music-hall medley, with comic and sentimental songs, accompanied by a piano between the acts or divisions of the tragedy to save their wretched skins. This is how the first "Variety Theatre" originated—partly by choice at the two protected patent houses, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and wholly by necessity at the unprotected houses like the Lyceum and several others.

Musical comedy so-called, now sitting for a time on the throne of burlesque, is a clever concoction, having neither beginning, middle, nor end, and, therefore admirably adapted for a *poco curante*, after-dinner audience who want to hear a song or see a dance, or stare at a particular (perhaps not too particular) young lady through a double-barrelled opera-glass. It has achieved success and deserves it. It deserves success because it is the first real

"We are a Merry Family"
Edward Terry

E. H. Royce

Kate Claxton

E. Terry

attempt to pay out the "Variety Theatres" in their own coin and to punish them for poaching on dramatic preserves, and filling their seats by breaking the law, when they ought to get it repealed, instead of representing utterly illegal "sketches." Public opinion is with them on their abstract right, but not on their persistent impudence, and their freedom from prosecution is entirely due to the more liberal feeling governing the theatrical managers of 1897, compared with the managers of thirty years earlier. Our best theatres now are in the hands of educated gentlemen.

Most sober, practical people would suppose that actors and actresses, whose lot has been happily cast in the theatres where the gentle art of grinning through a horse-collar has been most successfully cultivated, would remember the old English song, and the sound advice it gave—"Eat your pudding and hold your tongue!" These favoured members of a popular profession live and move and have their being in a golden age—golden as far as they are concerned, though not quite so golden to the out-of-date-and-elbow tragedian. The photographer is always at their door, and the open-eared and open-mouthed reporter is always craving an "interview." Illustrated papers are started and half maintained for their special glorification and advertisement. At an age when Sarah Siddons was tramping from town to town, and playing half-starved in barns, they are fed luxuriously at the Savoy or the Bristol, and asked how they came to

"go upon the stage," and what was the particular source of their inspiration. They answer these and similar questions according to their lights and their sense of importance. When "Wiry Sal" was interviewed rather hurriedly, and asked where she learnt her celebrated pump-handle, high-kicking step, she answered in her simple, artless language, "I s'pose it cum' to me!" A little more refinement is now expected from the higher Cult of the Horse-Collar. This refinement is generally obtained—such is the force of example if not of education; and, if not, it can be manufactured by the interviewer.

In my new combination, made quietly without any "preliminary paragraphs" or consultations with friends and "experts," Miss Farren was still my leading burlesque lady, but from this date, except when displaced for a time by French plays, she was destined to be a Gaiety fixture. I made a very long engagement with Mr. Edward Terry. I had watched his career, first at the Surrey and afterwards at the Strand Theatres, and concluded that he was now ripe for the Gaiety. He remained with me seven or eight years. I gave Mr. E. W. Royce a more definite position in the theatre, and more in harmony with what I had seen him do at Birmingham, when I first saw and decided to engage him. I added Miss Kate Vaughan to the other three principals. She brought, as her share of what soon became a celebrated "*quartette*," an air of refinement and a distinct and graceful style of dancing

CONSTANCE GILCHRIST (COUNTESS OF ORKNEY)

that were far removed from the acrobatic and gymnastic. I knew the school in which she was trained —the "Grecian" under Mrs. Conquest, the mother of George Conquest, and I knew many pupils of that clever lady who did credit to their teacher. Miss Kate Vaughan came to me not unfamiliar with theatre and music-hall work, and remained a distinguished member of my company for several years. Her engagement also was one of the most agreeable I ever made at the Gaiety. She was always ladylike and considerate, and though business and friendship, like business and relationship, are best kept apart, I am indebted to her friendship (as I said in my Autobiography) and that of the gentleman she married, Colonel the Honourable F. Wellesley, for many days and nights that I shall always remember with pleasure.

Another music-hall engagement that I shall always regard with equal satisfaction was that of Miss Constance Gilchrist. She was so young when I first made her a member of the Gaiety company, that we went through the form of an apprenticeship. She had appeared in a juvenile pantomime at the Adelphi Theatre, and long before several friends, notably the late Montagu Williams, advised me to engage her. I had arranged the contract with the late Mr. Ambrose Maynard, an excellent and honest "agent" who existed long before Waterloo Road was a music-hall market place. I did all I could to make her comfortable in the theatre, and she repaid me by quiet and amiable conduct, and a

determination to remain with me as long as I continued in management. She had several opportunities of "bettering herself," especially after she made the success with Mr. and Mrs. Florence as "Libby" in the *Mighty Dollar*. She might have had a leading position as a juvenile actress at a prominent London Comedy Theatre, but she declined all offers—in the latter case against my wish. She retired from the stage, and is now the Countess of Orkney.

Miss Phyllis Broughton was another young lady, equally agreeable and lady-like, who came to me from the music halls, and who remained with me for several years, although I could not always place her in a position justified by her ability.

I have said and written all this over and over again, and shall continue to write it as long as I can hold a pen in my hand. All these ladies—beginning with Miss Loseby and Miss Tremaine—had as much refinement and regard for the discipline of a management which they knew regarded their best interests as its own, as if they had been sent into the theatrical world from one of the severest of the Continental *Conservatoires*. Miss Agnes Hewitt, Miss Alma Stanley, Miss Marion West, Miss Amalia, and many others, deserve my warmest thanks, and especially one young lady, not in a prominent position, whom I had engaged from one of the minor music-halls. She had dramatic intelligence and good sense, and soon became conscious of her defective education. She begged to be re-

leased from her long engagement (on all-fours with Miss Gilchrist's engagement), and she went to a cheap convent school in Normandy, maintaining herself for about two years out of her scanty savings. She reported her progress every three months, and she is now the respected wife of a young literary friend of mine, the son of an older and dearer friend, who has left his mark on English journalism. If Exeter Hall can do better than this, I will subscribe to the Y.M.C.A. with the greatest pleasure.

I had one impostor in the theatre—a lady. Miss Alma Stanley pretended to be much older than she really was, in order to get over my objection to "children" at the Gaiety. I had made one exception in the case of Miss Constance Gilchrist, and I did not wish to make another.

August 26th, 1876, Mr. Henry J. Byron provided the whole of the programme, a farcical comedy, called *The Bull by the Horns*, in which he played the chief light comedy part, and a short burlesque (the first of a long series), called *Little Don Cæsar*, founded on Wallace's opera of *Maritana*. This was the first appearance of the new burlesque company. Mr. Byron was a pleasant conversational, though not a great actor, and a favourite with the public, not so much for what he was able to do on the stage, as for what he had written to amuse them.

Popular as this new combination, especially the burlesque portion, was destined to become, it was

the favourite "Aunt Sally" of a portion of the press, some of whom hit fairly, and others "below the belt." *The Times* (no longer John Oxenford) was the chief offender. It was never a theatrical organ, though at that time it had much authority and influence. Its greatest editor, the late Mr. J. T. Delane, a liberal man in other respects, had little sympathy with play houses and play actors. He was a political power, and he knew it. John Oxenford's instructions (we were brother dramatic critics or reporters together) were to say what he liked, but whatever he did to be careful that he spelt the names of the actors and actresses right, so that the paper might not be bothered with letters from what Mr. Delane called "these people."

The unfair remarks of *The Times* reporter on the New Gaiety programme even aroused my phlegmatic stage manager, Mr. Robert Soutar. He wrote to *The Times* at the close of August, 1876. The editorship was always in the hands of gentlemen, and the following letter duly appeared :—

"THE GAIETY THEATRE.

"The following letter has been addressed to the Editor of *The Times*:

"'SIR,—

"'In justice to our manager, Mr. John Hollingshead, will you allow me to answer a passage in your dramatic notice of to-day which is open to misconstruction? We get our "grateful and well-

earned holyday" at the Gaiety and our salaries at the same time, during the various changes of programme in the summer months. If this, however, were not the case, most of us would prefer that unbroken payment which we have had at the Gaiety for nearly eight years to a "grateful and well-earned holyday," which generally means a three months' suspension of salaries.

"'Yours obediently,

"'ROBERT SOUTAR,

"'*Stage Manager.*'"

The friction continued, and on September 11th, 1876, I followed (at a long distance, of course) in the footsteps of my old master, Thackeray, and published an advertisement headed—

TEA-BOARD THUNDER AND THEATRICAL SMALL BEER.

I am afraid my manifesto had more of the violence of William Cobbett than the ironical delicacy of Thackeray in its composition. I had become a writer of advertisements—a work which makes the style concise by the tax of a shilling a line, if it rather checks its graceful rotundity. This must be my excuse. I was annoyed by instructions how to manage my theatre, clearly outside the province of allowable criticism. That was my business. I was like the acrobat who attempts to "throw" a flip-flap or a back summersault. If he succeeds, he obtains applause and money; if he fails, he breaks his neck,

and there is an end to criticism. The bankruptcy court and the workhouse are always before the manager as places of punishment. My outbursts or "manifestos" generally defended my authors. In this one I said: "Two things one must always expect to read in the papers whenever a new piece by Mr. Byron is produced: first, that it is the worst work of a too prolific author; secondly, that it was written in six hours. The public generally give a denial to the first statement, and the second scarcely concerns them. However good a piece may be, they know that under the Gaiety system it can never remain too long in the bills; while, if bad, they have only to avoid the theatre for a night or two to secure its immediate removal."

Mr. F. B. Chatterton followed my example, and objected to the notice of *Richard the Third* at Drury Lane, where Barry Sullivan played the chief character.

Early in the December of 1876 Mr. Toole returned to the Gaiety under contract, and I had to provide him with new playfellows. Mr. Terry, Mr. Royce, Miss E. Farren, Miss Kate Vaughan, Mr. H. J. Byron, and others, were transferred with their farcical comedy and burlesque to the Opéra Comique Theatre in the Strand, which I had taken as an auxiliary playhouse, managing both houses. Mr. Toole (at the Gaiety) was supported by Mr. J. F. Young, an excellent all-round actor (since dead), Mrs. J. F. Young, Miss Kate Phillips, Mr. H. Westland, Mr. Charles Collette, Mr. Edmund

Leathes, and my daughter, Miss Bessie Hollingshead. They appeared in a piece by Mr. James Albery (the author of the *Two Roses*), called *The Man in Possession.*

The Gaiety company, housed at the Opéra Comique, went on much as usual. When the time came to produce a burlesque at the Gaiety—for the Gaiety at Christmas without a burlesque was like a pastrycook's with plenty of stale bread but no pastry—Mr. Reece wrote *William Tell* for Mr. Toole and his new companions, and clever as the ever-popular comedian was, there can be no question that he missed the help of Miss Farren. As I said in my Autobiography, "he had Miss Kate Phillips, but Miss Phillips, though excellent in comedy, was not a burlesque actress, and Mr. Alfred Bishop and Mr. Charles Collette, admirable in their way, compared unfavourably with Mr. E. Royce at the other house, where Mr. Edward Terry had also increased and consolidated the reputation which he had gained at the Gaiety. The Gaiety was not good for a 'Star,' except one like Charles Mathews, who brought his own pieces, and his own special style of acting."

Truth, January 4th, 1877, had a very poor opinion of the entertainment, but a very high opinion of Miss Rose Fox, my Shoreditch "penny gaff" skipping-rope dancer :—

"For nearly three hours I sat in that theatre, dissatisfied, disappointed, and discontented, when a young girl came forward with a skipping-rope.

She may have been the daughter of William Tell, or of Gesler, or of Mr. Alfred Bishop, for all I knew or cared. Her dancing soon arrested my attention, and warmed my heart. Every movement was the perfection of grace. Round and round went the rope, without her seeming to guide it, and her feet moved so quickly that they hardly appeared to move at all. It was a faultless masterpiece of unaffected refinement—motion and repose so harmoniously interwoven, that they became one and the same. Dancing has been termed the poetry of motion, and the dancing of this girl was an idyl—as different from the laboured contortions of one of those muscular and half-naked maidens, who fancy that the perfection of their art consists in intricate writhings, thews of iron, and a lavish display of their beplastered charms, as the smile of a baby differs from the grin of a Pantaloon. So skilfully was all art concealed, that she seemed a shy child playing with a rope in artless innocence, fearless, because she thought herself unseen; and yet nothing but long practice could have enabled her to wrap up from the audience the skill of the performance in admiration for its apparent simplicity and smooth flexible ease. As she danced on and on, I forgave Mr. Hollingshead for having entrapped me into sitting through his *Man in Possession* and his *William Tell.* I forgave Mr. Toole, and I forgave Mr. Albery."

My persistent attempts to transplant talent from the music halls was generally successful. I was

like a silk-buyer selecting silk by the touch, or a tea-taster selecting tea by the palate. Instead of remaining every night at the Gaiety, gloating over pieces that I had worked up in every detail at rehearsal, I went round to other theatres to see what my neighbours were doing, or to the "halls" in search of recruits. I have already mentioned Miss Loseby and Miss Tremaine; my other music-hall captures were Miss Marion West, Miss Rose Fox, Mr. John Dallas, Miss Lilian Cavalier, Mr. John Dauban, Mr. John Warde, Miss Phyllis Broughton, Miss Constance Gilchrist, Miss Jenny Hill, Miss Ada Wilson, Miss L. Wilson, Miss Kate Vaughan, and several others. I need scarcely say that other managers of the lighter theatres have since followed my example.

Late in 1876 and early in 1877 London was afflicted with a severe fire panic in connexion with the exceptional dangers to which theatrical audiences are nightly exposed. The lamentable fire at the Brooklyn Theatre, in America, began it. I wrote several letters to the *Times*, and got a well-known actuary to go into the records of deaths from fire in theatres, and to give me his calculation of the risk put into figures. The result was that I offered for a penny paid at the door with the entrance fee to secure and pay one thousand pounds in case of death from fire on that night in that theatre. The agitation went on, and the compulsory alterations since made in theatres may have inspired confidence in the minds of the public, but no one has

counted the cost. Where one person was burnt to death in a theatre fire in half a century (I am only speaking of London) by reason of faulty exits, many hundreds are now killed every year, as I have said before, by pneumonia and kindred diseases, caught in the theatres with "extra exits." Officials and architects pierce the outer walls regardless of draughts and similar evils, but the harm they inflict never culminates in a panic, and therefore keeps its record "out of the papers."

The Gaiety Theatre was a great "benefit" house, and I became a great benefit giver and organizer. As a working "chairman," I began in 1874 with the Benjamin Webster farewell performance at Drury Lane, and with the *School for Scandal* (the entire play), represented by the most phenomenal cast probably ever got together, and other attractions, and with a total absence of conscience or modesty in the prices charged and obtained for seats. About £2,000 was the net result.

In 1876 I occupied the same position in the benefit given to J. B. Buckstone at Drury Lane, when the entire *School for Scandal* was again played, with a cast almost as phenomenal as the Webster cast. The result was about £1,200.

On Wednesday afternoon, February 7th, 1877, I arranged a benefit at the Gaiety for John Parry, who had met with losses in the City. I placed the theatre and the staff at his service. The chief piece was *The Critic*, by Sheridan; but as the piece is now played, encrusted with a century of barnacle

gags, it ought to be put in the bills as by "Sheridan & Co., Limited."

Mr. Charles Mathews was to have played the dual characters of "Puff" and "Sir Fretful Plagiary"; but at 5 p.m. on the day before the benefit, I received the following characteristic letter:—

"59, BELGRAVE ROAD,
"*February 6th*, 1877.
"4 P.M.

"MY DEAR HOLLINGSHEAD,—

"I cannot tell you how disappointed I am at not being able to assist at the benefit of my dear old friend, John Parry, to-morrow. I should have been delighted to have put my best leg forward, but, alas! at this moment, I have no one leg that is better than the other. That agreeable complaint, so airily spoken of by those who never had it, as a 'touch of the gout,' has knocked me off my pins altogether. Your gout is a sad enemy to light comedy (we young light comedians are only men, after all), and how could I, in the character of 'Puff,' talk to Sneer and Dangle of my 'hopping and skipping about the stage with my usual activity,' while hobbling on by the aid of a stick (I have sometimes been badly supported even by two)?

"It is the first time I ever disappointed the public on a similar occasion, and I only comfort myself with the reflection that I shall not be missed amongst so many, and that after all, so that the

illustrious John be in good form, the audience will be amply gratified and pardon my unavoidable absence. I need not wish Parry success—one who has never known anything else—and can only envy those who are able once more to witness and enjoy it. I send no doctor's certificate,—I wish I was unable to do so,—but if any one doubts, all the harm I wish him is that he should exchange places with me for four-and-twenty hours.

"Faithfully yours,

"C. MATHEWS."

In the absence of Mr. Charles Mathews the characters assigned to him were divided, and most effectively sustained by Mr. A. Bishop and Mr. Charles Collette. The programme, as marking Mr. John Parry's last appearance in public, is interesting enough as a record to be printed in its entirety :—

THE GAIETY PROGRAMME.

Sole Lessee and Manager ... Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

Under the immediate Patronage and in the Presence of

THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.

The Duke of Westminster.	Lord Archibald Campbell.
The Duke of Beaufort.	Viscount Baring.
The Duke of Rutland.	Hon. F. Clifford Butler.
The Earl of Westmoreland.	Hon. D. F. Fortescue.
Lord Houghton.	Viscount Sydney.
Lord Londesborough.	Count Gleichen.
Lord Alfred Paget.	Sir Alex. Cockburn, Bart.
Lord Coleridge.	Vice-Admiral Chado.

The Duchess of Westminster.	Hon. Mrs. Blundell.
The Countess Gleichen.	Hon. Mrs. Herbert,
The Baroness Burdett-Coutts.	(of Llanarth).
Lady Camilla Fortescue.	Hon. Mrs. Clifford Butler.
Lady Goldsmid.	

A Grand Complimentary Afternoon Performance

Will take Place at this Theatre (kindly given by Mr. HOLLINGSHEAD), To-DAY, WEDNESDAY, Feb. 7th, for the

BENEFIT OF MR. JOHN PARRY.

HIS FAREWELL APPEARANCE.

At 2.15, SHERIDAN'S Play of

THE CRITIC;

Or, a Tragedy Rehearsed.

In which the following Ladies and Gentlemen, members of Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD'S Company, have kindly consented to appear.

In the Comedy.

Sir Fretful Plagiary	Mr. BISHOP
Sneer	Mr. MACLEAN
Dangle	Mr. BARNES
Mrs. Dangle	Miss LITTON

In the Tragedy Rehearsed.

Puff	Mr. COLLETTE
Governor of Tilbury Fort	Mr. YOUNG
Earl of Leicester	Mr. F. CHARLES
Sir Walter Raleigh	Mr. WESTLAND
Sir Christopher Hatton	Mr. ROYCE
Lord Burleigh	Mr. SOUTAR
Master of the Horse	Mr. FAWCETT
Don Ferolo Whiskerandos	Mr. TOOLE
The Beefeater	Mr. TERRY
First Sentinel	Mr. H. J. BYRON

Second Sentinel	... Mr. BELLEVILLE
First Niece	Miss KATE VAUGHAN
Second Niece	... Miss HENDERSON
Confidante	... Mrs. LEIGH
Tilburina	... Miss E. FARREN

MR. JOHN PARRY

Will attempt to recall Reminiscences of By-gone Days under the title of

ECHOES OF THE PAST.

1. The Tenor and the Tin Tack.
2. The Master and Pupil, or La Lezione di Canto.
3. An Operatic Rehearsal! The Conductor, The Orchestra, Tuning, Chorus, etc.

To be followed by

"CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME."

Libretto by B. ROWE. Music by ALFRED CELLIER. In which Mr. and Mrs. GERMAN REED'S Company have kindly consented to appear:

Messrs. A. REED, CORNEY GRAIN, and ARTHUR LAW, Mrs. GERMAN REED, and Miss FANNY HOLLAND.

After which Mr. JOHN PARRY will conclude with

"GOOSEY, GOOSEY, GANDER,"

And (a fragment from)

WHITTINGTON AND HIS CAT,

Including "BOW BELLS," etc.

Conductor of the Orchestra ... ... HERR MEYER LUTZ.

GAIETY BURLESQUE

PROSPECTIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS.

GAIETY AFTERNOONS.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON NEXT, FEBRUARY 10TH,

Mr. J. L. TOOLE, Miss E. FARREN, and Company in

PAUL PRY and THAT BLESSED BABY.

In preparation, a New Farcical Play, by F. C. BURNAND, called

ARTFUL CARDS!

MR. AND MRS. KENDAL

(By permission of Mrs. BANCROFT)

Will give THREE SPECIAL AFTERNOON REPRESENTATIONS of

THE LADY OF LYONS,

And other Plays, SATURDAYS, MARCH 3rd, 10th, and 17th.

MR. CHARLES MATHEWS

Will Re-appear on EASTER MONDAY, at the OPERA COMIQUE THEATRE, in some of his favourite pieces, under the Management of Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

OPERA COMIQUE THEATRE, STRAND,

OPEN EVERY NIGHT,

Under the Management of Mr. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

BYRON'S Drama

"THE PROMPTER'S BOX"

And New Burlesque of

"THE BOHEMIAN G'YURL AND THE UNAPPROACHABLE POLE."

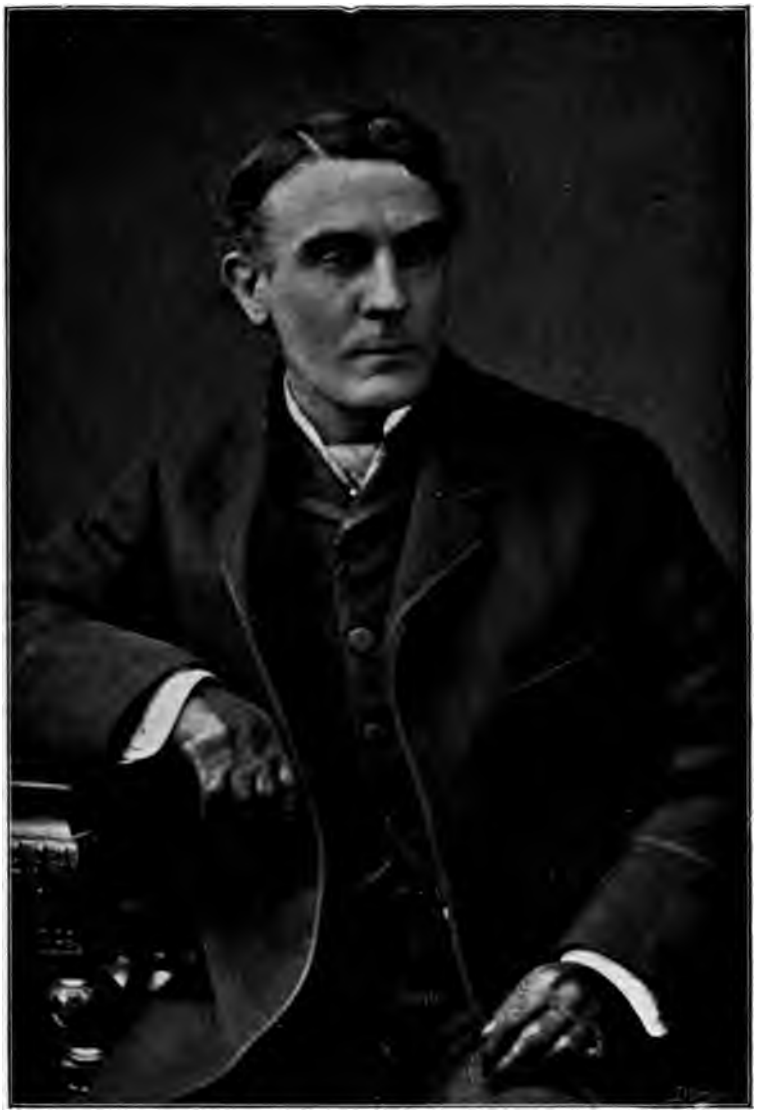
Misses FARREN, VAUGHAN and WEST, Messrs. TERRY, ROYCE, CHARLES, etc.

The proceeds, I am happy to say, reached about £1,600, and they made a good, kind, clever man, unequalled in his original form of musical entertainment, comfortable for the short remainder of his life. Those who want to know what his performance was like may be referred to the present Mr. George Grossmith.

When the time came for "Paddy Green" to be practically turned out of "Evans's," I got up a similar benefit for him at the Gaiety, which put about £700 in his dear old pockets; and when one of my popular actors, Mr. E. W. Royce, was suddenly stricken with paralysis, I gave him a Gaiety benefit which produced about £1,500. The benefit for the Isandula sufferers yielded a substantial amount, and the "Amateur Pantomime," about which I shall have something to say hereafter, benefited several deserving charities. The *Eurydice* benefit, the Maddison Morton benefit, the Shakespeare Memorial benefit, and many others, involved comparatively little labour; but one benefit for the Isandula Fund, if not in the amount realized, in the organization required to collect and arrange its programme, was the most remarkable benefit in the Gaiety annals.

The *Times* of May 7th, 1879, had the following remarks amongst others:—

"An entertainment will be given this afternoon at the Gaiety in aid of the Fund for the support of the families of the soldiers who fell at Isandlana, which for extent and variety has probably never



E. W. ROYCE

been surpassed by any 'benefit' or 'complimentary' performance recorded in the annals of the stage. No less that fourteen items appear upon the programme, which is timed to commence at 1.15, and will be concluded probably about 5.30 or 6 o'clock. Its variety, too, is no less remarkable than its extent, ranging, as it does, from Shakespeare down to modern burlesques."

These details certainly justify the *Times* writer:—

GAIETY.—ISANDULA FUND, TO-DAY.—GENERAL THEATRICAL AFTERNOON PERFORMANCE, for the benefit of this Fund, under the immediate patronage of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, THIS (Wednesday) AFTERNOON, May 7.

GAIETY. — ISANDULA BENEFIT. — TO-DAY. — The doors on this occasion will open at 1, begin at 1.15; carriages at 5.30. Prices:—Stalls, two guineas; balcony, one guinea; upper boxes, 10*s.*; pit, 5*s.*; gallery, 2*s.* 6*d.*; and private boxes at various prices. Notice.—Very few seats unlet.

GAIETY. — TO-DAY. — GENERAL THEATRICAL BENEFIT, in aid of the Widows and Orphans of all men belonging to the Queen's troops killed at Isandula and Rorke's Drift, 22nd and 23rd January, 1879, THIS (Wednesday) AFTERNOON, May 7th, 1879, under the immediate patronage of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.—Mr. John Hollingshead was asked to organize this Benefit by the Committee presided over by General Sir Hastings Doyle, and he has to acknowledge the kind and ready assistance given to him by the following managers:—Mr. Irving, Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, Mr. Hare, Messrs. Gatti, Mr. Gooch, Mr. J. S. Clarke, Mr. D'Oyly Carte, Messrs. Thorne and James, Mr. C. Wyndham, Mrs. Swanborough, Mr. Alexander Henderson, Miss Fanny Josephs, and Miss Litton. Mr. Toole and Mr. Sothern both regret that they are unable to

appear owing to provincial engagements. All the various companies have kindly given their services, and many volunteers have been left out for want of space. The Gaiety company, orchestra, staff and servants have also given their services. Mr. Nathan, of Tichborne Street, has kindly lent the military dresses for Ours, and Messrs. Clarkson and May have kindly given their aid.

GAIETY.—1.15, Operetta, An Evasive Reply: Messrs. Maclean, Strick, and Fawcett; Mrs. Leigh, Misses Rose, and Wadman.

HAYMARKET.—1.40, Scene from Sheridan's comedy of The Rivals. Sir Anthony Absolute, Mr. Howe; Captain Absolute, Mr. Terriss.

PRINCESS'S.—1.50, Mr. Charles Warner will Recite Hood's poem, Eugene Aram.

LYCEUM.—2.0, First Act of Shakespeare's play, King Richard III. Richard, Mr. Irving; Duke of Clarence, Mr. J. Cooper; Lord Hastings, Mr. Pinero; Brackenbury, Mr. Cartwright; Tressal and Barclay, Messrs. Walters and Everard; Lady Anne (first time), Miss Ellen Terry.

ADELPHI.—2.30, Mr. Hermann Vezin will Recite The Spanish Mother, by Sir Francis Hastings Doyle.

VAUDEVILLE.—2.40, Duet from Reece's burlesque, Romulus and Remus: Mr. David James and Mr. Thomas Thorne.

IMPERIAL (late Aquarium).—2.50, Duet from Younge's burlesque of The Lady of Lyons: Mr. L. Brough and Miss Lydia Thompson.

PRINCE of WALES'S.—3.0, the second act of T. W. Robertson's Comedy, Ours: Prince Perovsky, Mr. Arthur Cecil; Col. Sir Alexander Shendryn, Bart., Mr. John Clayton; Angus MacAlister, Mr. H. B. Conway; Hugh Chalcot, Mr. Bancroft; Sergeant Jones, Mr. Deane; a Servant, Mr. Newton; Lady Shendryn, Miss Le Thiere; Blanche Haye, Miss Amy Roselle; Mary Netley, Mrs. Bancroft.

OPERA COMIQUE.—3.35, Mr. George Grossmith will sing a new Buffa-scena. The Steinway grand piano, lent by Messrs. Metzler.

GAIETY.—3.45, the Alphabet Trio and Shadow Dance from Byron's burlesque, Young Fra Diavolo: Misses Farren and Vaughan, Messrs. Terry and Royce.

GAIETY BURLESQUE

COURT.—3.50, the comedietta by Mr. Theyre Smith, called Uncle's Will: Mrs. Kendal, Mr. Chevalier, and Mr. Kendal.

STRAND and GLOBE.—4.20, scene from Offenbach's comic opera, Madame Favart, including the Soldiers' Chorus, rustic song, The Artless Thing, Ensemble and Hiccup Chorus, supported by Miss Florence St. John, Mons. Marius, Mr. Harry Cox, Mr. De Lange, Mesdames Randolph, Barrington, Conteur, Weathersby, Angel, and Evelyne, and chorus.

CRITERION.—4.35, The First Act of Mr. Bronson Howard's comedy, called Truth: Mr. Alfred Sterry, Mr. Charles Wyndham; Mr. Frederick Fry, Mr. Carton; Mr. John Penryn, Mr. H. Standing; Sir Partridge Compton, Mr. W. J. Hill; Mrs. Dorothy Sterry, Miss Mary Rorke; Lady Compton, Miss Rose Egan; Patience, Miss A. Della; Prudence, Miss N. Phillips; Mrs. Stonehenge Tuttle, Mrs. Stephens; Mrs. McNamara, Miss L. Vinning; Jumps, Miss Emily Vining.

GAIETY.—4.55, a Comic Ballet, supported by Mr. John D'Auban, Mr. W. Warde, etc.

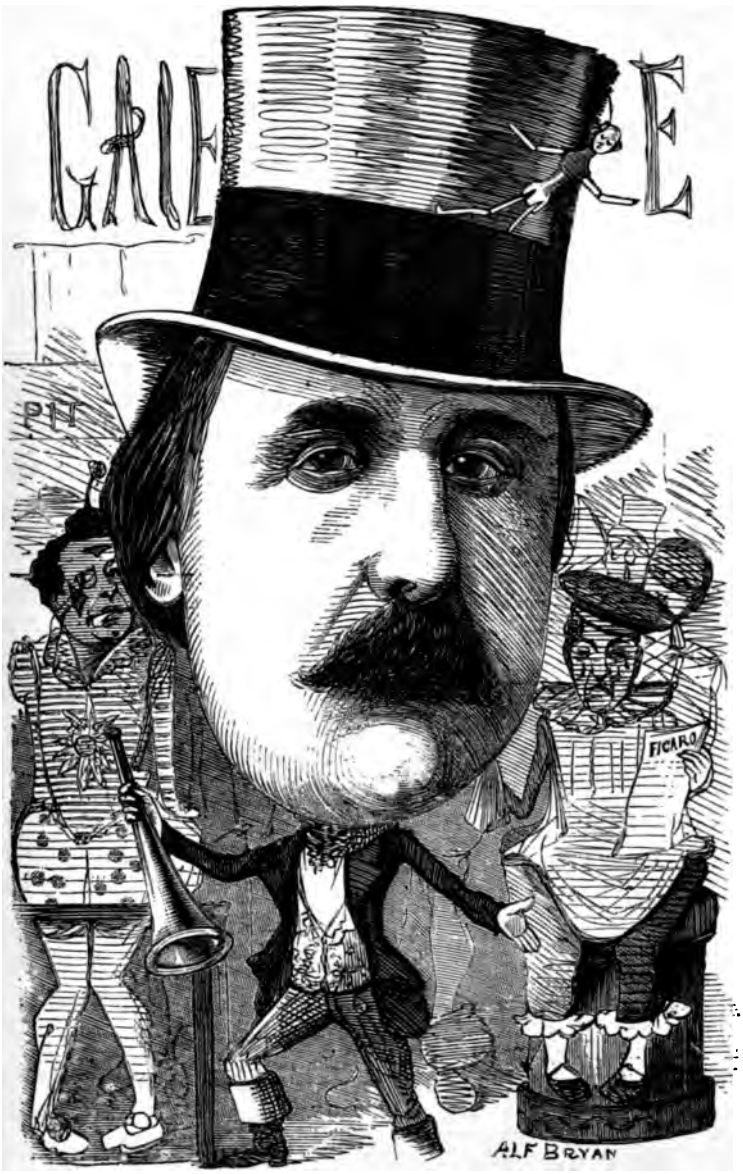
CHAPTER IX

French Plays and the Electric Light

THE production of *Artful Cards* at the Gaiety —an adaptation by F. C. Burnand of Labiche's French farce *La Clé*—served not only to back up the *William Tell* burlesque, but provided Mr. Toole with a good piece to take to the country. I was rarely a buyer of pieces. I paid a nightly fee, and if they were successful, or suited my shooting "stars," as I may call them, they were taken on tour, and the money they made went into the actors' pockets. This came of dealing with a liberal-minded manager. Though I did much for many pieces, I never appeared as "part-author" in the bills. In France I should, as a right, have always received a share of the profits.

In May, 1877, I began French plays at the Gaiety on something like a system, my determination for several years having been to ultimately engage the whole of the Comédie Française company.

When the Comédie Française was induced to come to London for the first time in its entirety in 1879, the negotiations were conducted in a purely



JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD

commercial spirit. Whatever worship of art there may or may not have been in the transaction was discreetly kept in the background on all sides. There was little or no sentiment in the "deal"—it was purely a matter of pounds, shillings and pence on one side, and of napoleons, francs and centimes on the other. The late M. Perrin, I am bound to say, behaved like a gentlemanly merchant dealing in literature, artistic talent, and the human nature of an historical subsidized playhouse. He might have been a banker. The hangers-on of the theatre, notably M. Francisque Sarcey, showed more excitement over the exportation of Molière's descendants than the director, M. Perrin, and seemed to be imbued with the Voltaireian idea that England was a half-civilized nation of Shakespearian barbarians. He attached himself to the company in some undefined position as guardian and protector from the time they left Paris to the time they returned after fulfilling their contract.

This contract on the French side was an assured certainty; on my side it was a speculation, regarded by many theatrical experts—the late Mr. Mitchell, the whole Library "Trade" of Bond Street, Mr. Henry Irving, Mr. John Hare, and my own far-seeing landlord, the late Mr. Lionel Lawson—as extremely hazardous. I entered into it cheerfully, as the risk rested entirely on my individual shoulders. I represented no syndicate, and never had a "backer." The "Trade" turned their backs upon it, so I appealed to my friends, the public.

The appeal was not in vain. Thousands were poured into Coutts' bank in a few hours. If there had been a loss, I was prepared to pay it. I knew what loss was probable and possible. There was no loss—quite the contrary. The six weeks' season yielded a nett profit of £7,000. M. Francisque Sarcey, who had his stall every night, and was allowed to give a lecture, and received a fancy *honorarium*, stated in *Le Temps* that my profits were more than double that amount. He arrived at his imaginary figures by debiting me with all the premiums which the seats fetched for subscribers on the "Sarah Bernhardt nights," which premiums I had as much to do with as I had with the gold-reserve of the Bank of England. To put it mildly, in a spirit of international courtesy, M. Francisque Sarcey was mistaken.

The detailed figures of the Comédie Française season as they exist in the Gaiety books have an interest as part of the theatrical history of the Théâtre Français. The managers of that distinguished theatre had no power to call for these figures, as the company came over at a contract price, but they were given to the appointed cashier as a matter of courtesy. M. Emile Perrin had an opportunity of "sharing," which he declined. He was left to name his price. He fixed what he called the average *maximum* of the Théâtre Français, £240 a night, and £160 for the Saturday's *matinée*, making £1,600 a week, always payable in advance. The terms were agreed to. £1,600 was immedi-

ately paid as a deposit, and a similar amount was always paid every Monday morning during the performances before mid-day. My local expenses brought up the nightly outlay to about £350, and in addition to this I paid £80 for an interior scene of the Louis XIV. period, which the stage director said he wanted to make him feel comfortable.

The company comprised the following *Sociétaires*:—

MM.	*Date of Election.*
E. Got	1850
Delaunay	1850
Maubant	1852
Coquelin Ainé	1864
Febvre	1867
Thiron	1872
Mounet-Sully	1874
La Roche	1875
Barré	1876
Worms	1877
Coquelin Cadet	1878
Mmes.	
Madeleine Brohan	1852
Favart	1854
Jouanain	1863
Riquer	1864
Pousin	1866
Dinah Félix	1871
Reichenberg	1872
Croizette	1875
Sarah Bernhardt	1876
Blanche Baretta	1876
Emilie Broisat	1876
Jeanne Samary	1878

The *pensionnaires* included MM. Garrand, Prudhon, Boucher, Martel, Joliet, Dupont-Vernon, Roger Sylvain, Volny, Raney, Richard, Truffier, Masquillier, Baillet, Tronchet, Villain, and Davrigny; Mmes. Pauline Granger, Lloyd, Martin, Bianca, A. Médecin Dudley, Agar, Thénard, Fayolle, and Frémaux.

The cherished traditions of the Théâtre Français are to make no actor or actress a "star," and these traditions were rigidly adhered to by the managers of the company, but were not accepted by the British public. Weeks before the company arrived general curiosity had been fixed upon Sarah Bernhardt. The crowd that went down to Dover to meet the boat—not a Barnum organized crowd, but a perfectly spontaneous and enthusiastic mob or "deputation"—looked eagerly for Sarah Bernhardt. The attendant photographers watched for Sarah Bernhardt. The chroniclers and "special correspondents" made a feature of Sarah Bernhardt. Before the curtain rose on the first night the great British public had made Sarah Bernhardt a star—a star of the first magnitude. This was proved by the variations in the receipts on the nights when she was in or out of the bill, the performances being so arranged that the company could give the pick of its repertory. In submitting to this arrangement I acted as a bad tradesman, getting no credit from M. Francisque Sarcey, and suffered a pecuniary loss in consequence of my self-sacrificing liberality.

DETAILED LIST OF REPRESENTATIONS.

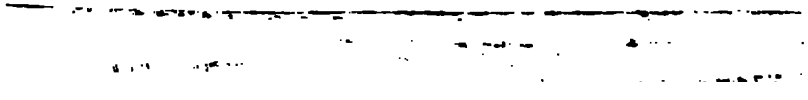
1879.			*The asterisks refer to Bernhardt nights.*	£	s.	d.
Monday,	June	2	Prologue, "Misanthrope"; 2nd Act, "Phèdre," "Les Précieuses Ridicules"	*523	3	0
Tuesday	„	3	"L'Etrangère"...	*502	10	0
Wednesday	„	4	"Le Fils Naturel"	371	18	6
Thursday	„	5	"Les Caprices de Marianne," "La Joie Fait Peur"	404	7	6
Friday	„	6	"Le Menteur," "Le Médecin Malgré Lui"	381	10	6
Saturday	„	7	"Le Marquis de Villemer" ...	398	7	6
Morning	„	7	"Tartuffe. La Joie Fait Peur"	349	3	0
			1st Week, £2,931.			
Monday	„	9	"Hernani"	*543	10	0
Tuesday	„	10	"Le Demi-Monde"	457	1	6
Wednesday	„	11	"Mdlle. de Belle-Isle," "Il Faut qu'une Porte soit Ouverte ou Fermée"	416	13	6
Thursday	„	12	"Postscriptum," "Le Gendre de M. Poirier"	417	11	6
Friday	„	13	"Phèdre"	*556	15	6
Saturday	„	14	"Luthier de Crémone," "Le Sphinx"	*533	11	6
Morning	„	14	"Misanthrope. Les Plaideurs"	353	6	0
			2nd Week, £3,278 9*s.* 6*d.*			
Monday	„	16	"L'Ami Fritz"...	374	13	0
Tuesday	„	17	"Zaire," "Les Précieuses Ridicules"	*522	19	6
Wednesday	„	18	"Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hazard," "Il ne Faut Jurer de Rien"	441	7	6
Thursday	„	19	"Le Demi-Monde"	486	4	6
Friday	„	20	"Les Fourchambault" ...	447	6	6
Saturday	„	21	"Hernani"	*534	9	0
Morning	„	21	"Tartuffe," "Il faut qu'une Porte," etc.	84	11	0
			3rd Week, £2,891 11*s.*			

Monday June	23	"Gringoire. On ne Badine pas avec l'Amour"	443	3	0
Tuesday „	24	"Chez l'Avocat," "Mdlle. La Seiglière"	386	14	6
Wednesday Morning „	25	"L'Etrangère"	*468	7	6
Wednesday „	25	"Le Barbier de Séville" ...	367	4	0
Thursday „	26	"Andromaque. Les Plaideurs"	*533	5	6
Friday „	27	"L'Avare," "L'Etincelle" ...	471	0	6
Saturday „	28	"Le Sphinx," "Le Dépit Amoureux"	*514	6	0
Morning „	28	"Hernani"	*549	3	0
		4th Week, £3,733 4*s.* 0*d.*			
Monday „	30	"Ruy Blas"	*546	14	6
Tuesday, July	1	"Mercadet," "L'Eté de St. Martin"	394	2	6
Wednesday „	2	"Ruy Blas"	*526	10	6
Thursday „	3	"Le Mariage de Victorine," "Les Fourberies de Scapin" ...	406	13	6
Friday „	4	"Les Femmes Savantes," "L'Etincelle"	478	14	0
Saturday „	5	"Les Fourchambault" ...	427	13	6
Morning „	5	"Phèdre," "La Joie Fait Peur"	*570	10	6
		5th Week, £3,350 19*s.* 0*d.*			
Monday „	7	"Le Marquis de Villemer" ...	422	15	6
Tuesday „	8	"L'Ami Fritz"	440	4	0
Wednesday „	9	"Hernani"	*571	0	0
Thursday „	10	"Le Sphinx"	*551	0	0
Friday „	11	"Philiberte," "L'Etourdi" ...	459	18	6
Saturday „	12	"Ruy Blas"	*506	18	0
Morning „	12	"Gringoire" (5th Act), "Hernani," "La Bénédiction" (recitation) "Davenant," "L'Etincelle" ...	*549	0	0
		6th Week, £3,500 16*s.* 0*d.*			

Total, £19,685 19*s.* 6*d.* (an average of £468 10*s.* a performance).

These figures, if dissected, will show that out of the forty-three performances (including seven

SARAH BERNHARDT



matinées) the eighteen in which Sarah Bernhardt played produced an average of £534 for each representation, while the twenty-five representations in which she did not appear produced an average of £400 for each performance. My expenses always remained the same—about £350 a night. The very small receipts (£84 11*s.*) at the *matinée* of June 21st arose from the fact that Sarah Bernhardt was slightly ill and could not play her part in the piece announced—*L'Etrangère*. The audience were given their choice of having their money back, tickets for another performance, or remaining to see *Tartuffe* and the little piece *Il faut qu'une Porte*, etc. The figures recorded show how few remained, even to see Molière's masterpiece played to perfection, while those who went away, claiming their money back or fresh tickets, must have represented more than £400. The extra *matinée* (June 25th) was given to atone for June 21st. The prices, I should state, were always double the ordinary theatrical prices, and even then the one-guinea stall on "Sarah" nights or mornings was often sold in the "open market" by subscribers at five guineas.

These facts and figures taught Madame Bernhardt her commercial value, and made Coquelin and even Got restless and discontented. The visit to England was an administrative mistake on the part of the directors of the Comédie. Before the close of the brief season Sarah Bernhardt offered to come back the following year, and bring with her a carefully selected company. On being asked her

personal terms, she replied, "£80 a performance for herself—or £560 a week—playing six nights and one *matinée*." I agreed to this, and had no cause to regret my decision. She came in 1880, opening May 24th, and gave twenty-eight representations in four weeks. The receipts were £9,471 9*s*., or an average of £340 a representation. She came several seasons in succession, and I always found her an honourable and hard-working actress, ever ready to oblige at any personal inconvenience. Her indefatigable energy and power of work were remarkable. In 1880 she finished on the 19th of June, and the Palais Royal company followed in its entirety, including Madame Chaumont (an actress, as M. Perrin admitted, who ought in her early career to have been at the Théâtre Français), giving twenty-eight representations, spread over four weeks, ending July 17th—the receipts being £6,364 12*s*. I had Madame Judic with a company, Madame Granier with a company, and even Madame Thérésa with a company during various seasons. The latter lady—a great music-hall artiste—was very successful and popular.

I indulged in French plays from time to time, as I have before stated, almost as soon as I opened the Gaiety Theatre. I had French opera bouffe, French comic opera—more than half the repertory from the Opéra Comique, Paris—and companies from the Vaudeville, the Palais Royal, the Gymnase, etc., and continued this policy year after year in the height of the summer, as at that time I generally

found my ordinary entertainments were seriously affected by the hot season. I always kept the theatre open with something. I have played to less than £3 rather than turn the key in the door and break the continuity of ceaseless work. Very early in my career as a theatrical manager I determined to import the whole Comédie Française at any cost. The negotiations began in the lifetime of M. Thiers, and my friend, Sir Campbell Clarke, did his best, which was a good deal. He saw the statesman at six in the morning at St. Cloud and got a decided *non possumus*. "They went once—a portion of them," said M. Thiers—"during the Commune. That I could not help. They are essentially a Parisian institution. If they go again, from that day their subsidy ceases." After the death of M. Thiers negotiations were opened again, this time by Mr. M. L. Mayer, who watched his opportunity when the theatre had to be re-decorated, and I am indebted to his tact, perseverance, and knowledge of his people and subject for their successful issue.

As an important manager (managers are always important) with many literary friends — fellow-workers in my old trade—I received a few letters introducing ladies and gentlemen who either wanted to "go on the stage," or, being on the stage, wanted promotion or a London engagement. I always saw them, and gave them the best advice, and sometimes a small position in one of my companies. Miss Mary Moore (who afterwards became Mrs.

Albery, while at the Gaiety, and is now the leading lady at the Criterion) was one of these; Mr. Forbes Robertson's younger brother, Norman Forbes, was another; the ill-fated Mr. Arthur Dacre was another (his wife, equally ill-fated, had been a member of the Gaiety company when Miss Amy Roselle), and Mr. H. Brookfield (until I made him accept a position with Mr. Bancroft, worthy of his talent) was another. Mr. Arthur Lloyd, the great tenor singer, narrowly escaped being sucked into the Gaiety vortex. Occasionally jokes were practised upon my stage manager and musical director. My friend, Madame Titiens, brought Mdlle. Van Zandt, the young and celebrated opera-singer, to have her voice tried for the chorus. Lutz and Soutar heard her, and Lutz said and thought that she would do very well, "if she could only sing seconds"!

I have given a few specimens of Charles Reade's letters of introduction, and the following note from George Augustus Sala may go into the records :—

"46, MECKLENBURGH SQUARE, W.C.
"*Monday, Twenty-seventh May*, 1878.

"MY DEAR J. HOLLINGSHEAD,—

"Letters of introduction, I am perfectly well aware, do not always turn up trumps. When Billy Russell went to New Orleans, he very warily *sent* all his introductions by messenger instead of delivering them in person. In due time answers arrived,—some only visiting cards, others containing invitations to dinner. There was one of an excep-

tionally characteristic nature, running thus : 'General Hercules S. Spreadeagle' (let us say) 'presents his compliments to Dr. Bullrun Russell, and would be glad to hear at what hour it would suit the convenience of Dr. B. R. to be on the steps of the St. Charles Hotel, in order that General Spreadeagle may have the pleasure of publicly kicking him as far as the Levee and back again.' *Verbum sap.*

"The bearer of this being of the gentler sex, your well-known courtesy will restrain you from resenting my hardihood by any violent means (although Maddox of the Princess's once rang the bell for seven carpenters 'to turn that mad woman out'—the woman being an American lady who had brought him a new and original drama in seven acts. Mrs. Caroline Watts Phillips and her daughter Rolande are not mad. Mrs. Phillips is simply trying to move heaven, earth, and managers to obtain an engagement for Miss Rolande, who has had two years' hard and practical training in country theatres, and whom I know to be a very clever and intelligent young lady. I have not the slightest idea as to whether this introduction will do her any good. I merely cast my bread on the waters even at the risk of finding it after many days in the shape of a sharp admonition from some exasperated manager to mind my own business—which is clearly not that of obtaining engagements for young lady actresses.

"Always yours,

"G. A. SALA.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, ESQ."

In August, after the French season of 1877, the Gaiety company—the company of the now famous "quartette"—returned, and began their junketings with Byron's *Weak Woman* and the *Bohemian Girl* burlesque. Miss Evelyn Rayne, Miss Wadman, and Miss Amalia joined the company, and were most useful, amiable, and attractive members. Miss Amalia was most sprightly in burlesque, Miss Wadman was an accomplished vocalist, and Miss Evelyn Rayne was a most agreeable and effective substitute for Miss Kate Vaughan when that lady was absent through illness. About the middle of October we produced one of our best short burlesques—*Little Doctor Faust.* The "quartette" were never better fitted. A little, but not much, was said about the desecration of Goethe (I called it the "Gaité, not the Göthe version" in the advertisements); but the protesting writers were not aware that *Faust* forms the most popular subject for burlesque in Germany. *Faustling und Marguerittle,* originally produced in the early seventies at the Karl Theater, in Vienna, and sent on tour through Germany, was one of the best burlesques I ever saw, as I sat out burlesques in France and Germany if not in England. *Faust* was backed up with a version of *La Cigale,* by MM. Meilhac and Halevy (the Parisian Beaumont and Fletcher), which I wrote myself, chiefly to give Miss E. Farren a chance of playing the part created in Paris by Madame Celine Chaumont. I called it the *Grasshopper,* and gave some offence to the playwrights by putting the names of the French

authors prominently in the bills, and keeping my own name, as the journeyman-tinker, in the background. It was cheap honesty, but apparently (I am quoting my Autobiography) it was open to objection. There was much "chaff" in the piece about the "Impressionist" school of painting, and Mr. Gordon Thomson and Sig. Pellegrini, the great caricaturist, gave this clever artistic form. A comic portrait of "Jim" Whistler was painted by Pellegrini, with the celebrated artist's consent; but this consent not being generally known, I was accused of bad taste in exhibiting caricatures of living people, as if no such thing existed as caricature journalism! This is how the Gaiety was often advertised, and was able to do without sandwich-men and posters. Here is Mr. James Whistler's letter:—

"*Oct.* 27, 1877.

"My dear Hollingshead,—

"I will see Pellegrini and let you know.

"I should be delighted to do anything that might conduce to the general completeness of your piece, and am sure that in your hands I run no risk of making a mistake.

"J. A. McN. WHISTLER."

At Christmas we produced, for the *matinées* only, a little trifle in the shape of a pantomime, called *Valentine and Orson*, acted by a large company of tried and untried people. We kept the night company and the night performances distinct, as much as possible.

As we had got our hands in now for pantomime, the idea occurred to me of getting up an amateur pantomime for a charitable purpose. I knew the amateur pantomime (*Guy Fawkes*) invented and produced at the Olympic by Albert Smith in the fifties; I had played Pantaloon in an amateur pantomime at the Lyceum in the sixties, so I had learnt something of the business outside of my Gaiety experience. I ventilated the idea at the "Beefsteak Club," and in a night or two I had a volunteer company big enough for two pantomimes. The composition of the piece—the writing—was the work of Mr. R. Reece, Mr. H. J. Byron, Mr. W. S. Gilbert, and Mr. F. C. Burnand. The stage direction was in my hands. Herr Lutz was the musical director, Mr. R. Soutar the stage director, and Mr. John Dauban the "pantomimic instructor." The description of the piece had best be given in the words of the *Morning Advertiser* of February 14th, 1878, the day after the first afternoon performance:—

"The Gaiety was crowded with a fashionable and aristocratic audience, and the performance was honoured by the attendance of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales, the three little Princesses, and the Duke of Connaught. Detailed criticism on the doings of the amateurs would be entirely out of place, and it is sufficient to say that the dialogue in the opening was spoken glibly, and the pantomimic business throughout was performed in a brisk and spirited manner. Con-

siderable amusement was furnished by one of the predatory 'forty,' who made up remarkably well as the ex-Premier in his now historical character of the woodcutter, or feller of trees. The professional ladies, whose names will be found below, gave most valuable assistance. The following was the cast: 'Ali Baba,' a woodcutter, Captain Gooch; 'Ganem,' his son, Mr. W. F. Quintin; 'Cassim,' his brother, Mr. Algernon Bastard; 'Hassarac,' captain of the Forty Thieves, Mr. Jos. Maclean; 'Abdallah,' his lieutenant, Miss Helen Barry (Mrs. A. Rolls); 'Mesrour,' Mr. F. H. M'Calmont; 'Benridden' (Mr. W. Wye), 'Mustapha' (Mr. Leslie Ward), 'Saad' (Mr. Gilbert Farquhar), 'Beder' (Hon. F. Parker), 'Noureddin' (Mr. W. Higgins), 'Assad' (Major Rolls), and 'The Trumpeter' (Mr. A. Stuart Wortley), Gentlemen of 'The Forty' (the Deserving Hanging Committee). The remainder of the Forty Thieves were represented by Messrs. E. Darell, W. Wye, J. Westropp, J. Cumming, C. Ringrose, C. Daly, Hugh Drummond, J. Graham, Cecil Chapman, A. B. Cook, Benson, and Amphlett; Hon. C. Vivian, etc.; also Twenty Young Ladies, who had kindly given their services, by permission of the manager and directors of the Alhambra. 'Morgiana,' Miss Lydia Thompson; 'Cogia,' Miss Eleanor Bufton; 'The Good Fairy,' Miss L. Buckstone; 'Clown,' Mr. W. Wye; 'Harlequin,' Mr. W. S. Gilbert; 'Pantaloon,' Mr. T. Knox Holmes; 'Policeman,' Captain H. E. Colvile; 'Swell,' Lord de Clifford; 'Artist,' Mr. Leslie Ward; 'Tailor,'

Mr. W. F. Quintin; 'Bricklayer,' Mr. J. Graham; 'Butterman,' Mr. C. Ringrose; 'Butcher,' the Hon. F. Parker; 'Butcher's Boy,' Mr. C. Daly; 'Baker,' Mr. L. Ward; 'Sweep,' Mr. W. Higgins; 'Waiter,' Mr. J. Westropp; 'Ung Mossoo,' Mr. A. Bastard: 'A Gent,' Mr. A. B. Cook; 'Columbine,' Mdlle. Rosa; 'Old Woman,' Mr. F. H. M'Calmont.

"The Harlequinade consisted of two scenes. Mr. W. S. Gilbert's appearance as 'Harlequin' was an event. He went to his self-imposed work with amusing determination, and missed none of the conventional business. The 'Clown,' the 'Policeman,' and the 'Swell' took the leaps very neatly, the 'Harlequin' not being behindhand in this far from easy exercise. Mr. Wye, the 'Clown,' sang the immortal 'Hot Codlins,' and the bacchanalian ditty usually given by the motley brethren at Christmas time. The 'Pantaloon,' Mr. T. Knox Holmes, may be called a veteran pantomimist, inasmuch as he assisted at an amateur performance of a similar kind twenty-three years ago. Mdlle. Rosa, from the Alhambra, flitted about the stage with charming grace as 'Columbine,' of which character she is a very efficient representative. Thanks to the appreciation of humour of all concerned, the Harlequinade went admirably. Mr. Leslie Ward, as the 'Artist,' showed his skill in two rapidly executed portraits of Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone, drawn in black and white chalk on a board."

The rehearsals were mostly midnight meetings

after the night performances, but we had a few visitors occasionally, including Royalty. Captain Colvile was a wonderful leaper, Lord de Clifford an equally wonderful high-kicker, and Gilbert a most earnest and conscientious harlequin.

Those who knew London well in 1878, and the system of public lighting existing at that time, will know that if the vestries had not been largely assisted by enterprising and pushing shopkeepers, prominent amongst whom stood the gin-palace (generally a corner block) and the cheap advertising tailor, the metropolis would only have been a little better illuminated at night than a French country town or city. The people that Napoleon the First sneered at—forgetting that the huckster, as English tourists know to their cost, is not confined to England—do all they can to make their dingy city brilliant, and the effect of their efforts is seen on a Sunday night, when their shutters are put up by Act of Parliament, and in Piccadilly (the Green Park section), where there are no shops and no shutters. Piccadilly, at all night times, is a little better than it was a century ago with its oil-lamps, but not much; and Regent Street on the Sabbath is always a gloomy desert.

Knowing that every advance in public improvements has to be taken, in the first instance, by private enterprise, I at last made a step which I had contemplated for several months. At the beginning of 1878 I introduced the electric light (now in general use) to London and England, for

the first time. The story of how this was done appeared in the *World* of August 28th, 1878 :—

"Towards the close of 1877 a couple of huge lamps, burning a very brilliant white light, made their appearance in front of the Grand Opera in Paris. Even in a city so well illuminated as Paris these lamps attracted general attention, and inquirers were told that the system employed was a Russian patent, with the invention of which a gentleman named Joblochskoff was credited. By degrees the new luminary spread in Paris, as was natural amongst an intelligent and energetic people not fettered with too much local self-government. The Joblochskoff lamps were soon seen on each side of the new Avenue de l'Opéra, at the Orangerie public gardens, at the Arc de Triomphe, the Châtelet Theatre, and other places of importance. The parochial mind in England was not yet sufficiently acted upon, and it was not until an experiment with the Joblochskoff machinery was announced at one of the great docks at the East End of London that the gas companies became aware of the existence of this formidable rival. The usual result followed. A small panic in gas shares immediately took place, for no particular reason, as no inquiry had been made; and this panic immediately subsided after it was known that the experiment, from a variety of causes, was a comparative failure. The gas companies, representing in London alone about twelve millions sterling of capital, sank once more into a placid sleep. One vestry issued a report, a discus-

sion took place at the Institute of Civil Engineers; but no one introduced the light to the London streets, although it had been burning in Paris for more than nine months.

"Towards the close of June, 1878, the manager of a prominent London theatre—a house devoted more to the persistent amusement of the public than to the cultivation of a very high standard of dramatic art—decided to close his doors for redecoration. The house had been kept open almost uninterruptedly for nearly ten years, and it was thought that at last four weeks might be spared for artistic repairs. The manager, a somewhat energetic, not to say restless, individual, even before his house was closed, began to consider how he could utilise his enforced holiday, so as to reopen with a new sensation, and it occurred to him that the 'electric light' would be a good thing to introduce in London for that purpose. It did not occur to him that it was hardly the proper function for a theatrical manager to act as a pioneer in this matter in a city governed by forty or fifty vestries and a Metropolitan Board of Works, with an annual rating that is fast treading on the heels of the imperial taxation, and with gas companies, as before stated, representing twelve millions of capital. He did not stop to argue, he went to Paris, and sought out the leading director of the Joblochskoff light. He was politely received by that gentleman, and was offered his invention for the whole of England at the moderate sum of £350,000 English money.

The theatrical manager was hardly prepared with the sum at a moment's notice, and he suggested a preliminary trial of the light at a handsome royalty; this suggestion was not acceded to, but was treated with polite contempt. He was disappointed, but not defeated. He offered a liberal sum for a few weeks' experiment, and then was candidly told that the Joblochskoff light could not be shown in London, as an intermediate machine, with which it had to be worked, was the subject of a Chancery suit about an infringement of patent.

"In this extremity the baffled manager made further inquiry, and found that the Joblochskoff light was not the only one in the Paris market. He found, in fact, the Lontin light, the inventors of which had not had the money and influence to get possession of the principal street in Paris, but who had to be content with illuminating the station of the Lyons Railway and the goods dépôt of the railway of the West. This, as far as he could judge, was equal in effect to the Joblochskoff, while he was told that it had many advantages in point of economy and adaptability, and had been preferred in a kind of competition in the Hippodrome. Luckily he found that a friend — a well-known banker in Paris—had a small interest in this treasure, having assisted the inventor at starting; and through him he arranged for the exportation to England of the necessary machinery, lamps, wire, etc., and two experts to establish and manage the lights.

"Arriving home in the midst of builders and decorators, his work began again. To set the French machinery in motion (an enormous revolving magnet and electrical coil) he required the aid of a powerful steam-engine of not less than twenty horse-power. This is not a machine easily found in a cellar or fitted up in a garret, and the manager had to look round his immediate neighbourhood, as his electrical machines would not allow him to go farther than 500 yards; and the farther he went the greater the expense for connecting-wire. He went to an old friend, the proprietor of a fashionable organ, and stated his requirements; but as the paper had only one steam-engine, the proprietor—who hates machinery—was naturally timid about having this tampered with.

"The manager again went his ways, and looked in at many printers', bookbinders', etc., finding that half the houses in his locality were full of steam-engines, but not of the requisite horse-power. At last he approached the proprietor of a popular journal, at some little distance from his premises, and succeeded in persuading this proprietor to give him a footing in his engine-room, and to allow him to make the necessary alterations in the engines. When the magnet and distributor, weighing about four tons, had been got with difficulty into their position near the engine, they had to be imbedded in masonry, and then the parish authorities had to be applied to for permission to open the roadway to convey the wires underground to the points of

illumination. When this consent was obtained, and the work done, the case of French lamps was opened, and it was found that everything breakable had been smashed to atoms *in transitu*. A lamp-maker had to be found to construct another, and better, set of lamps in forty-eight hours, and on Thursday night, August 1st, 1878, about midnight, the light was successfully rehearsed; and on the following night, at nine o'clock, the Strand, about the centre, was publicly lighted with the electric light, and has been so lighted every night since from about eight o'clock to eleven. This light, which is artificial daylight, with a dash of moon-light in it, is produced on a large scale at about half the cost of gas, and is without smell, without heat, and is not destructive of colours. When all the theatrical managers, publicans, and advertising tailors in London have secured this light for their premises, the fifty vestries, the Metropolitan Board of Works, and the gas companies with the bloated capital will think there is really something in it."

The *Morning Post* of August 3rd, 1878 (and many other journals) gave the following description of the experiment of August 1st and 2nd :—

"LIGHTING BY ELECTRICITY.—Passengers along the Strand last evening were interested and astonished at the dazzling brilliancy all around the Gaiety Theatre, where an electric light new to London was being experimentally tried. Visitors to Paris are well acquainted with the effect of the electric lights in the Place de l'Opéra, but the six lamps here employed

gave a combined effect much more striking. The arrangement is that of M. Lontin, and the generator here used is the identical machine employed during the last few weeks of the exhibition, when work was carried on night and day. This has been now placed in a neighbouring newspaper office, and is worked by a steam-engine there. The wires are carried underground to the Gaiety, and then to the several lamps. The 'regulators,' which hold the carbon 'candles' and keep them in due position while burning, are stated to be on an entirely new principle. M. Lontin claims two important features as peculiar to his invention: one is the division of the currents so that they can be used at different lamps at will, and as many as thirty-six lights have been kept going at once with one machine; the other is the small amount of attention that the 'candles' require. The light has been introduced to England by Mr. John Hollingshead, with the hope that the experiment will lead to the introduction of electric lighting into London. It is proposed to continue the experiment every night for a short time, and in a day or two to carry connecting wires to Pall Mall, so as to show that the light can be produced half a mile from the generator of electricity. The cost is said to be very trifling after the machinery is once fixed."

This lighting novelty caused much correspondence in the papers, and many articles. Professor Erasmus Wilson showed the "folly of prophesying unless you know," and I wrote the following letter,

which appeared in the *Times* of September 21st, 1878:—

"THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'TIMES.'

"SIR,—

"In a report of a meeting of the Crystal Palace District Gas Company, held on Thursday, the Chairman, Professor Erasmus Wilson, is made to say, among other things, 'With regard to the electric light, much has been said for and against it; but I think I may say, without fear of contradiction, that when the Paris Exhibition closes the electric light will close with it, and very little more will be heard about it.'

"If Professor Wilson had known of the mass of applications which I have had for this light from London, the provinces, and abroad, since I introduced it to London in the Strand on the 1st of August, he would not have been quite so confident about the undisputed reign of gas. A company has been formed to supply this light to the various applicants, and this company will be made public in a few hours.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

"GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND."

Another statement produced another letter in the *Times* of October 5th, 1878:—

"THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'TIMES.'

"SIR,—

"The statements made by Mr. Long and the Chairman of the Phœnix Gas Company as to the comparative cost of gas and electric lighting, and more or less reproduced in your leader to-day, require immediate correction, as much in the interest of the gas companies as in the interest of the gas consumers. I am a gas consumer, paying from one to two thousand pounds per annum for gas, and I have paid this sum for ten years. I have tried an electric light, which I brought to London, inside and outside the Gaiety Theatre for the last three months, and I think that gas companies will be as foolish to believe that electricity will immediately and universally supersede gas as they will be foolish to believe that electric lights can only be produced at twelve times the cost of gas. The Chairman of the Phœnix Company draws his figures from the most costly experimental light in Europe, the light in the Avenue de l'Opéra, Paris, and Mr. Long omits to state how many rooms he lights for £200 a year—a most important fact in the present but only momentary state of electrical science. If either of these gentlemen wishes to test the comparative cost of gas and electricity, I shall be most happy to give him an opportunty, in a place like the Central Hall of the Alexandra Palace, and I shall be much mistaken if I cannot

prove in this case that electricity can be supplied at half the cost of gas. My own experiments (necessarily wasteful) have come out at about four-fifths the cost of gas.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

"OFFICES OF THE ELECTRIC LIGHTING COMPANY,
14, PALL MALL."

A few jocular remarks may be quoted from the *World* (Sept. 4th and Oct. 2nd, 1878):—

"It is a mere nothing that the electric light at the Gaiety has, in a manner, blotted out the rest of the Strand, but the consequences will be serious if in future an admiring crowd of playgoers cannot find the temple of Mr. Henry Irving. So long as the new lamp 'holds out to burn' over the stage-door of Mr. Hollingshead's establishment, the grand but dingy portals of the Lyceum are practically invisible, and all the buildings in the locality are enveloped in an apparent fog so dense that Jeames will have considerable difficulty in discovering the office of the *Morning Post*. Some effort to assert themselves is imperatively required on the part of Mr. Hollingshead's neighbours, if they do not wish to be consigned to the limbo of 'Underground London,' which a certain 'restless individual' explored long before the Gaiety Theatre had been called into existence.

* * * * *

"Those who have felt oppressed by Mr. Hollingshead's brilliant light in the Strand, may be

reminded that their fate was predicted long since by the Laureate:

> 'Gaiety without eclipse
> Wearieth me, May Lilian.'

But your true poet is always a seer. As much certainly cannot be said of the prose-writer. Do any of my middle-aged readers remember the Bude light, or have they forgotten it with other old flames of their youth? In 1842 the *Spectator* confidently predicted, after an apparently successful experiment in Pall Mall, that 'in a few years the Bude light would supersede gas, as far as gas has superseded oil for street-lighting.' Where is that Bude light now? It has faded with other lights of other days."

The cost of the six arc lights at the Gaiety was necessarily large—the case with all experiments. I kept them burning for about nine months.

For some weeks I was regarded as a millionaire, through Stock Exchange speculations in gas shares. No outsider could get into that particularly close market or out of it with safety. The fall in the twelve millions sterling of gas shares fully justified the *Crœsus malgré lui* theory. The light, as far as the Gaiety was concerned, was simply an advertisement. As such it was well worth its money.

CHAPTER X

The American Drama—The Parsee Drama and Curtain

AT the end of August, 1878, along with the electric light, Thackeray was introduced to the stage by Mr. F. C. Burnand, in a comedy called *Jeames*, founded on the immortal *Diary*. Mr. Terry represented the leading character, and the piece still holds the stage after an interval of nearly twenty years.

As I am responsible, and gladly accept the responsibility, for putting George Augustus Sala's head through the Gaiety horse-collar, so I am responsible for placing my friend Mr. Herman Merivale in the same position. The author of the *White Pilgrim* needs no praise from me, but I knew that with his literary taste and poetical feeling, he was gifted with rare and delicate humour, and I persuaded him to take the *Lady of Lyons* and push it over the edge of clever but inflated Drama into the underlying gulf of Tomfoolery. The piece was well written and well played, but, like others, it had the fault of being before its time. It was full of fun, character, and delicate satire, but was written before Mr. W. S. Gilbert had shown

EDWARD TERRY

that burlesque in long clothes need not be utterly divorced from literature on the stage.

At Christmas I again introduced a holiday programme for mornings only, by revising Henry J. Byron's old Princess's pantomime of *Jack the Giant Killer*. Miss Jenny Hill was the principal "boy." She was the only woman of genius of the Nelly Farren type who ever brightened the music hall.

The evening burlesque was Byron's *Young Fra Diavolo*. Miss Constance Gilchrist was advanced to the front as a juvenile dancer, mastering the skipping-rope dance, and avoiding Miss Kate Vaughan's distinct style. After months of careful rehearsal, as the performance was dangerous, I brought out Mdlle. Ænea, whose invisible wire-dance, then first seen, soon became popular all over Europe. In this dance, Mr. Willie Warde, a most devoted member of the company, and a most graceful dancer, was of invaluable assistance. My "manifesto" of December 21st, 1878, ran as follows:—

"To the Public.

"TO-MORROW, December 21st, 1878, will be the tenth anniversary of the opening of the Gaiety Theatre. The house was handed over to me on December 21st, 1868, and it still remains in my possession. I am spared an elaborate defence of my management by one great and important fact that is probably unequalled in metropolitan theatrical history. I have kept the theatre open for ten years

without closing it for more than ten weeks for repairs, etc., and against these ten weeks I have given 379 *matinées*—equal to one year and a quarter of night performances. I was the first to establish these *matinées* on a new principle—that of giving a different performance in the afternoon to the one given at night. I am happy to say that I have found many imitators, both in England and France. I promised on December 21st, 1868, that I would abolish all fees, and I have kept my word. If this is an administrative mistake, it is a very large one, for it has cost me £10,000; but I have no reason to believe that the public are blind to the comforts of the Gaiety system. In arranging my entertainments I have been governed by few theories and fewer prejudices. I have never tried to force on the public what I think they ought to have —I have rather striven to give them what I think they want. My eclecticism has covered 'Shakespeare, Taste, and the Musical Glasses.' The three celebrated actors, whose loss the stage now has to deplore—Charles Mathews, Samuel Phelps, and Alfred Wigan—were all intimately associated, for several years, with the Gaiety Theatre. I was the first to bring the electric light to England for public buildings, and while our parochial and civic authorities are reporting voluminously on this subject, the Gaiety frontage and the Strand generally are nightly made brilliant by this new illuminator. Finally, after three years' negotiation, I have induced the whole of the Comédie Française to visit

England for the first time in their entirety next June, and I am happy to say that the public have supported me in this effort by subscribing £12,000 in nineteen days.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

"GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND,
December 20th, 1878."

We were not idle in the early part of 1879, although that year, above and beyond all, was the year of the Comédie Française. I have dealt with this French season in an earlier part of the book. Mr. Byron produced a comedy called *Uncle*, to be soon followed by *Boulogne*, a piece by F. C. Burnand, founded on *Niniche*, which Madame Judic had made popular in Paris. Judic's part was played by Miss E. Farren. Mr. Byron rapidly turned on a burlesque called *Esmeralda* to back up the comedies.

A special morning performance of the first part of *Henry IV.* was given for Arthur Sketchley to have a trial trip in "Falstaff." His "Falstaff" was a better reading than Mark Lemon's, but still it was a "fat" reading.

As I have said before, I constantly defended my authors (and consequently myself as the prime mover of the puppets) in my advertisements. Mr. Byron was often in need of my championship :—

"ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTH NIGHT OF BYRON'S *Little Don Cæsar*; THREE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH REPETITION OF MISS FARREN'S SONG."

From the first night's notice in the *Times*: "Mr.

Terry did not strike us as very amusing, though he did his best. . . . The burlesque was very much on a par with the very bad farce that preceded it. . . . Much of the enjoyment appeared to be derived from some antics with a feather, with which Miss Farren accompanied an extraordinarily stupid song."

Mr. Henry S. Leigh, the graceful author of *Carols of Cockayne*, did some journey-work for me in adapting a French piece, and I supported him to the best of my ability. *The Grand Casimir* was not a burlesque of the ordinary Gaiety pattern, but another "musical comedy," born before its time :—

"GAIETY.—NOTICE.—*The Great Casimir.*—This piece contains a very scanty display of legs and no cellar-flap breakdowns. . . . The 'opinions of the Press' are so diametrically opposed to each other that it would only make the Press look ridiculous to quote them."

Mr. F. C. Burnand (well able to defend himself) allowed me to defend him from the charge of desecrating one of Shakespeare's most delicate creations :—

"GAIETY.—*Ariel.*—Fifteenth year, and number thirty-seven of a form of entertainment which, though said to be beneath criticism, generally provokes more criticism and critics than any other theatrical production. . . . *Ariel*, measured by the money standard—the only standard that any body, following Shakespeare's example, seems really to value—has been a success. In nine weeks it has

coaxed the public out of 50,000 American dollars."

Dr. Furnivall, the secretary of the new Shakespeare Society, approved of the piece, and allowed me to publish his approval. *Ariel* was remarkable for the fact that in it I first introduced the electric light—the incandescent lamp—on the stage as part of Miss Farren's costume.

Mr. Robert Reece I had to defend for carrying out my suggestion (I cannot call it my invention) of three-act burlesques. I defended three-act burlesques on the ground that they were as worthy of three acts as most *opera bouffes*.

"GAIETY.—*Aladdin.*—A favourable specimen of the New School of burlesque, in which artistic dancing is substituted for the cellar-flap breakdown, in which the music is carefully selected, and executed in a way worthy of comic opera, and in which gracefully designed costumes take the place of the old red, green, and blue abominations."

"GAIETY.—*Aladdin.*—Neither obstinate fogs, nor carefully nurtured fire-panics, have affected the success of this piece. The average receipts for forty-four performances have been £203 for each representation, as against £185 for the *Forty Thieves*." It was not common twenty years ago to publish receipts with exact figures, though it was very common to bluff and bounce about them. I always told the truth, and, being a theatrical manager, few people believed me.

My annual "Notices to the Public," on the anniversary of the opening of the theatre, were

dignified by the Press with the name of manifestos. They might have been called pronunciamientos. The first in the subjoined list obtained celebrity, because of a phrase it contained, "The Sacred Lamp of Burlesque." This phrase appears to have become historical in theatrical journalism.

"TO THE PUBLIC.

"To-day (Monday), December 20th, 1880, the Gaiety Theatre will complete its twelfth year. During these twelve years I have kept it open every night, with the exception of ten weeks, and against these ten weeks I have given 500 *matinées*, or performances equal to one year and two-thirds of a year of nightly representations. Throughout my management I have always endeavoured to keep the sacred lamp of burlesque burning. There have been short periods in the career of the Gaiety when this lamp has been put on one side, though never extinguished. The long engagement of Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault, the return of Mr. Charles Santley to so-called English opera, the last brilliant performances of the late Charles Mathews, the varied and final appearances of the late Samuel Phelps, the French plays, the *Comédie Française*, etc., have pushed the lighter forms of dramatic entertainment from their stools for a time—but only for a time. The regular burlesque company of the Gaiety has always been acknowledged as the strongest in London, but the more serious dramatic efforts at this theatre have had the advantage of

FORBES ROBERTSON

many powerful combinations. The late Mr. Alfred Wigan, the late Miss Neilson, Mr. Clayton, and others frequently played together in the same pieces. A drama of Mr. Byron's, which ran more than 100 nights, was represented by Mr. Toole, Mr. Clayton, Miss Neilson, Miss Litton, and Mr. Henry Irving; one of the old comedies was revived with Mr. Phelps, Mr. Vezin, Mr. L. Brough, Mr. Charles Mathews, and Mr. Toole in the principal parts, and a Shakespearian play, which ran for a considerable period, was represented by Mr. Phelps, Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mr. Vezin, Mr. Righton, Mr. Belford, Mr. J. G. Taylor, Mr. Forbes Robertson, the late Miss Furtardo, Miss Rose Leclercq, and Mrs. John Wood, with a song by Algernon Swinburne, and original music by Arthur Sullivan. Mr. W. S. Gilbert produced his first comedy at the Gaiety, and collaborated for the first time in a comic musical piece with Mr. Arthur Sullivan, while the late Mr. Compton made his last appearance on the stage in a few *matinées* at the same theatre, playing 'Mawworm' in the *Hypocrite*, with Mr. Phelps as 'Dr. Cantwell.' Long runs have been the exception at the Gaiety, and infinite variety the rule, the variety covering the whole area of dramatic entertainments.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

"TO THE PUBLIC.

"To-day (Wednesday), December 21st, 1881, will complete my thirteenth year at the Gaiety Theatre,

and during this time the house has only been closed ten weeks, while against these ten weeks I have given 610 *matinées*, which are equal to two full years of nightly performances. Many theatres may have given better—none can have given more varied—entertainments during this time, while no London theatre, past or present, can show such a record of continuous work. As I announced nearly a year ago, I shall produce on Saturday night, December 24th, a burlesque drama in three acts, by Mr. Robert Reece, on the subject of *Aladdin*, being No. 3 of these very popular Gaiety pieces. In this Mr. Edward Terry, who has had no part in *Whittington*, will make his reappearance after his long provincial tour.

"The series of three-act burlesque dramas will be continued, and *Blue Beard*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Valentine and Orson*, the *Sleeping Beauty*, etc., are amongst the subjects under consideration. The ninth season of French plays will begin Monday, May 29th, for six weeks, and will include M. Coquelin, and a company selected from the Théâtre Français for his repertoire. Madame Sarah Bernhardt will follow, and the season will terminate with an important engagement, not yet finally settled.

"The Gaiety theatre is as safe as any London theatre can be from accident by fire; no theatre can provide against the effects of panic. The two magnificent exits which once communicated with the adjoining enormous pile of buildings are still bricked up by Act of Parliament. This is another

idiotic result of Government slap-you-and-put-you-to-bed legislation. As I have no more pecuniary interest in the Gaiety Restaurant than I have in St. Paul's Cathedral, I can decently ask the public to assist me in breaking down these dangerous barriers.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

"TO THE PUBLIC.

"To-day (Thursday), December 21st, 1882, the Gaiety Theatre completes its fourteenth year. I opened it on December 21st, 1868, and I have kept it open every night, with the exception of ten weeks or sixty nights, for fourteen years. Against these sixty nights I have given 673 *matinées*, or performances that are equal to two years and a quarter of incessant nightly work. I have taken from the public at the Gaiety alone in those fourteen years about £544,000. I have paid the State, in rates and taxes, about £16,000. Literature, through its distant relatives, the dramatic authors, has received about £30,000; the Press, in the shape of advertisements, has received about £40,000; and the dramatic profession has received from me about £300,000. The Church has not allowed itself to be forgotten, and the Rector's rate of St. Mary-le-Strand has been punctually demanded and punctually paid. No London theatre, as I have said before, can show such a record of obstinate, continuous work, which has been done without shop-bills,

sandwich-men, posters, frantic advertisements, and mainly without quoted or quotable newspaper notices. I ought, perhaps, to apologise to the gentlemen of the Press for the pain I have doubtless given them by producing so many three-act burlesque dramas, but the public—a large general public, as shown by the £544,000 receipts—appear to find a pleasure in this form of entertainment, and I have a large and valuable company well skilled in supplying it. Our French plays afford an agreeable change after the autumnal and winter burlesques, and at our numerous *matinées* we occasionally dabble in the Wardour Street and Sunday School drama. The theatre as a structure has been surveyed by the Metropolitan Board of Works, and they have induced the owners to spend a certain amount of money on builders and architects. The twenty-two exits into four different streets, which the theatre had when it was built, have not been added to or diminished. After what has occurred in Berlin with an iron curtain, and in a town of Hungary with alternative oil lamps, the public will perhaps think I was wise in having my doubts about these panic-born contrivances. The two doors on the dress-circle and upper-box levels, which once communicated with the grand exit staircases in the adjoining restaurant, are still bricked up, as they were in 1873, by pot-house legislation.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

"TO THE PUBLIC.

"Friday, December 21st, the Gaiety Theatre completed its fifteenth year. During this time—almost an unbroken 'season'—the house has only been closed ten weeks, and has given as a set-off 789 *matinées*. Put in another form, the theatre has been closed only four nights a year, and has given an extra performance or *matinée* during every week of its existence. When the theatre was built for me in 1868, it was called the Gaiety—a title that I accepted as part of the lease. Such a title naturally encourages a light and festive entertainment. Opinions differ as to this form of art, and what I dignify by the name of Pantagruelism, another gentleman may call grinning through a horse-collar. Having the Gaiety, however, and not the Mausoleum Theatre, I am not surprised to find that I have produced thirty short burlesques, seven three-act burlesques, one lengthy Christmas piece, two morning pantomimes, besides being a pioneer in the direction of *opéra-bouffe*. Mixed with this, in the proportion of about one to two, I have had ten seasons of French plays, representing nearly every form of French dramatic art, and many similar seasons of English and Anglo-French comedy. I have never gone out of my way to solicit newspaper support, nor have I ever interfered with a newspaper contributor in the discharge of his duty; but I have always exercised my right of answering what I considered unfair 'notices.' I hope my

'answers' have not overstepped the bounds of fair controversy. They have generally been confined to the correction of matters of fact, or the errors of uninspired prophecy. I must be excused if I do not think I am responsible for the paralysis of one actor or the well-known and well-advertised three months' absence of another. That the public are satisfied is proved by the vitality of the theatre. This public, I am told, are all 'mashers.' If by 'masher' is meant a playgoer who thinks for himself, this theory may be right; but if it means the modern dandy, it is decidedly wrong. A theatre which, unlike most theatres, has been kept open almost night and day for fifteen years, which during that time has taken and expended between six and seven hundred thousand pounds, can hardly find its main support in a score or more of eccentric young gentlemen, who are neither remarkable for money nor social influence. If the Press, instead of wasting its valuable ink on this phantom of the imagination, would aid me in opening the bricked-up exits between the theatre and the restaurant, they would do the public—mashers included—a substantial service, and remove a disgrace to every licensing, official, parochial, and Government authority in London.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

"*December*, 1883."

I had not got far into my thirteenth year of management before I thought of giving a few

matinées to show some of the masterpieces which were performed at the Two Patent Theatres. These theatres, or rather their special privileges, were dead, and it would have been unkind to attack them if they had not left a large body of worshippers behind them, who still asserted that free trade had degraded the drama. I called these *matinées* sometimes "Educational," but more frequently "Palmy Day Performances, for the Instruction of Dramatic Critics and lovers of Theatrical Art." I started like an opera manager with a repertory which I never got through, and never thought I should get through. It included Matthew Lewis's *Castle Spectre* and *Wood Demon*, Sotherne's *Oroonoko*, Colman's *Mountaineers*, Murphy's *Upholsterer* and *Grecian Daughter*, Steele's *Tender Husband* and *Conscious Lovers*, Lillo's *George Barnwell*, Rowe's *Jane Shore* and *Fair Penitent*, Bickerstaffe's *Lionel and Clarissa*, Dr. Moore's *Foundling*, Cibber's *Lady's Last Stake* and *She Would and She Would Not*, Hughes's *Siege of Damascus*, Pocock's *Miller and his Men*, and Sheridan's version of Kotzebue's *Pizarro*.

I announced the series as follows :—

"TO THE PUBLIC.

"At a period when the London stage is more distinguished for revivals than for original productions, it has occurred to me that a few afternoon performances of certain neglected dramas, like

George Barnwell, *The Castle Spectre*, *Pizarro*, etc., may give the playgoers of to-day an idea of the dramatic works that were witnessed by their grandfathers, and relied upon to sustain the fortunes of the two protected monopolist theatres. The difficulty will probably be to get actors and actresses to treat these productions with becoming respect, but this is a matter of selection and stage management. These performances will take place every Wednesday, commencing Wednesday afternoon, April 21st, with *George Barnwell*.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

George Barnwell bore the test of the modern footlights better than I expected, and Mrs. Bernard Beere (who had made her first appearance on the stage at a Gaiety *matinée*) was so impressed with the character of "Millwood" that she at once spoke to Mr. W. G. Wills, who was present, about modernising the play for her to "star" in. Mr. Wills was a man of undoubted genius, but of dilatory habits, and he had probably suggested as many plays to managers, and delivered skeleton plots as Lopez de Vega or H. J. Byron had written pieces. He was eccentric to the verge of slovenliness in his appearance, and encouraged many jokes about his contempt for soap and water which were doubtless imaginative products of the jocular mind. The story that he mislaid the manuscript of his great play *Charles the First*, and had given it up for lost until some one suggested it might be in his bath

(where it was at last found), is only one of a dozen of such amusing fictions.

The notices of the Palmy Day Dramas were rather "mixed," and I issued the following advertisement :—

"GAIETY.

"Most of the notices of this performance have borne ungrudging testimony to the level excellence of the acting. In some quarters, however, it has been regretted that the old style of representation could not have been revived with Lillo's tragedy. It was thought to be more wise and respectful to play it in our modern and somewhat undemonstrative manner. *George Barnwell* was selected as a good specimen of old-fashioned work. If some of the lighter productions of the old time—the burlesques and musical spectacles, to say nothing of the tight-rope walkers and dancing elephants—had been selected to represent the 'palmy days,' the merits of modern burlesques would have been made a little more apparent. One form of revival could not have been produced, for no actor of any position would now play Horatio, as Charles Young did, to the Hamlet of a Mannikin Roscius.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

I gave a short history of the play, which I now reprint :—

"The play of *George Barnwell* was originally pro-

duced either under the title of *The Merchant* or the *London Merchant* at Drury Lane Theatre, July 2nd, 1731, before a distinguished audience, amongst whom—a delighted spectator—was the not easily moved Mr. Alexander Pope. The critics came to laugh with the old ballad of 'George Barnwell' (published about the middle of the 17th century) in their hands, but either remained to weep or pray. The piece at once secured a success, and before the 20th of August in the same year it had been played seventeen times—a marvellous run for those days. Its fame had travelled outside the theatre with such effect, that the Queen (the Consort of George II.) sent for the prompt copy of the play to read, and Mr. Wilks, the actor, had to trot down to Hampton Court with this precious manuscript. The original cast stood thus: 'George Barnwell,' Mr. Cibber, jun.; 'Thorowgood,' Mr. Bridgewater; 'Trueman,' Mr. W. Mills; 'The Uncle,' Mr. Roberts; 'Blunt,' Mr. R. Witherhilt; 'Millwood,' Mrs. Butler; 'Maria,' Mrs. Cibber; and 'Lucy,' Mrs. Charke. The play was repeated at the Goodman's Fields Theatre in 1731, at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1732, at Covent Garden in 1740, at Drury Lane again in 1749, and in 1796. The cast at the latter performance comprised Charles Kemble, Aikin, Holland, R. Palmer, Packer, Mrs. Siddons, Miss Miller, and Miss Pope. The latter was a little restive about her part of 'Lucy.' The piece was produced at the Haymarket in 1804, when the great Elliston played 'George Barnwell,' and at

Bath in 1817, when the gallows was introduced bodily on the stage in the last scene, to the great satisfaction of the critics. The author of the piece was George Lillo, an estimable City man, born February 4th, 1693. He wrote, in all, eight pieces, *Fatal Curiosity* and *Arden of Feversham* being the best known amongst them, next to *George Barnwell*; and he died, respected and regretted, September 3rd, 1739. He intended *George Barnwell* to be played in Elizabethan costume, but the managers have always played it in Georgian dress. As a great moral play it has converted many felons or would-be felons, who have shown their gratitude in effusive letters, and in some cases in solid gifts of money to the actors. The present revival, I am afraid, will be too short to produce any such beneficial effect.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

My second "Palmy-Day" performance was more successful for my particular purpose. This was Monk Lewis's *Castle Spectre*, a fine, old, crusted specimen of lurid melodrama. It excited ten times the merriment of a Gaiety burlesque. People dislocated many of the stalls with their mirth—it was so very violent. The Wardour Street drama was triumphant as a sample of what our grandfathers not only tolerated but admired. I gave the piece every chance, as the following cast will show:—

Dramatis Personæ.

Earl Osmond	Mr. J. D. BEVERIDGE
Earl Reginald (a Captive supposed dead)	Mr. J. B. JOHNSTONE
Percy (Earl of Northumberland) ...	... Mr. CRAWFORD
Father Phillip	Mr. SHINE
Motley (the Castle jester)	... Mr. W. ELTON
Kenric (Confidant of Osmond's) ...	... Mr. T. SQUIRE
Saib, Hassan, Muley, Alaric (Black Slaves of Osmond's)	Mr. C. FAWCETT, Mr. J. MACLEAN, Mr. ALWIN, Mr. ROBINSON
Angelia	Miss LOUISE WILLES
Alice	Mrs. LEIGH
Spectre of Evelina	... Miss HOBSON

The actors, I am bound to say, treated this curious fossil of dramatic protection with more than proper respect, and did not "guy" the parts allotted to them.

The first new burlesque produced after the departure of the Comédie Française in 1879, and the return of the Gaiety Company to London, was *Hernani*, suggested by Victor Hugo's play, which had formed part of the French repertory. The Gaiety company in their entirety had been for a short tour in the provinces, including a Royal Command week at Yarmouth. *Hernani* was written by Henry J. Byron.

While I was in Paris, making arrangements for the appearance of the Hanlon-Lees at the Gaiety, in their pantomimic and acrobatic farcical play, the *Voyage en Suisse*, I received the sad intelligence

of the sudden death of Mr. Lionel Lawson, my friend and landlord. The shock of the news, which I received just before going to the Variétés Theatre, where the Hanlon-Lees were performing, was accentuated by the fact that I had sent a telegram to Mr. Lawson in the morning, asking him to join me for a little recreation in Paris. When my telegram arrived in London, Mr. Lawson was lying dead.

The *Grand Casimir* (which I have before alluded to) followed *Hernani*, and this was soon backed up by a farcical piece by Mr. F. C. Burnand, adapted from the French, called *Unlimited Cash.*

The Gaiety was a Theatre-Militant. I was always having passages of arms with the "authorities." In the *Daily Telegraph* of October 21st, 1879, I wrote the following: "I see from reports in the public Press that the Metropolitan Board of Works, acting under its new-born Parliamentary powers, has been amusing itself by making a survey and drawing plans of the exits and entrances of the Gaiety Theatre. Knowing the construction and capabilities of this theatre, and knowing how many places of amusement there are in London that ought never to have been built, and certainly ought never to have been licensed, it seems to me that the Metropolitan Board of Works, in this case, is rather on the wrong scent. A theatre that has free access to four streets—east, west, north and south, that has from three to five exits on every floor, and is insured at a much lower rate than most

other London playhouses, because of its fireproof structure, need give very little concern to the Metropolitan Board of Works, or any other surveying authority.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

This may have looked like flying in the face of Authority; but Authority, as the Press told it, was wrong, and had to retire. Soon after this I determined to erect a long iron and glass "lean-to" shelter in Catherine Street to protect my pit and gallery patrons from the rain. I found (privately) that if I asked permission from the Local Board, I should be tied up with a direct refusal, or smothered with a reference to a "Works Committee." I got the material made and fitted in Derby, sent up by train, and erected during Saturday night and Sunday night. After this I applied for permission, and was threatened with a prosecution, which never came. The shelter was probably the first erected in London, and it still remains.

Mr. F. C. Burnand, not having satisfied himself with *Unlimited Cash*, produced, with his usual rapidity, a burlesque, *Robbing Roy, or Scotched and Kilt.* It was one of the cheapest and one of the most effective pieces of a long series. It was an afterpiece, the first part of the bill being filled by one of Byron's comedies or dramas, in which the author (back on the stage) was a leading actor.

Mr. J. L. Toole had now arrived at that point

in the process of theatrical evolution, in which the "Star" actor has to become his own manager. Mr. Toole did not rebel against the forces of Nature, and he transferred himself, for a season, to the Globe Theatre. To show that he was still on friendly terms with me and the Gaiety (and there was certainly no reason why he should not be friendly) part of his programme consisted of a farce, which I had written for him many years before. Eventually Mr. Toole took the little theatre in King William Street, Charing Cross (now destroyed), which has sometimes been called the "Charing Cross," and sometimes the "Folly." He made many much-needed alterations, and stamped the house with his name. It was probably the worst house in London from a structural point of view, as the Gaiety was, at that time, probably the best; but our pig-headed, unbending licensing method (I will not insult the English language by calling it a "system") gave us both exactly similar licenses, and exactly of the same value.

Christmas, 1879, saw the production of a big spectacular burlesque in four acts and twelve scenes, called *Gulliver*. Henry J. Byron was the author, and I was the "arranger." The scenic artists were Mr. Beverley, Mr. Grieve, Mr. F. Lloyds, Mr. Perkins, and Mr. Hann; the ballets were got up by Mr. John Dauban; the costumes were supplied by M. Alias; and in the cast were Miss E. Farren, Miss Kate Vaughan, Miss Gilchrist, Miss

Louis, and Miss Wadman, Mr. Edward Terry, Mr. E. W. Royce, Mr. W. Elton, and Mr. T. Squires (four low comedians), many recruits from the music-halls, and about one hundred children. During the run of the piece, which was very successful and much praised, nearly four hundred people—men, women, and children—entered the stage-door every night, until the place was crammed with half-boiled humanity. I was not sorry to find an excuse, more or less sound, for withdrawing the piece, even before its popularity was altogether exhausted. A few very dense, foggy nights had something to do with this decision (regretted by many papers, including the *Referee*). I could not forget that the hundred children, dressing in a big room under the pit, which looked, for the time being, like a Sunday school, lived in nearly every distant district of London. In addition to the Gaiety, at this time I had taken the Olympic Theatre, where I tried a comedy by Sir Walter Besant and Mr. James Rice, called *Such a Good Man*, and I produced the Christmas pantomime *Jack the Giant Killer* at the Crystal Palace. The Olympic company consisted of Miss Fanny Josephs, Miss Nellie Bromley, Mrs. H. Leigh, Miss Edith Bruce, Miss Lizzie Coote, Miss Bella Howard, Mr. Edward Righton, Mr. Macklin, Mr. David Fisher, junr., Mr. J. Maclean, Mr. Beveridge, Mr. Penley, and Mr. Charles Wyndham.

At Easter, 1880, the Olympic was ready for the transfer of the Gaiety company, the Gaiety

W. J. FLORENCE

Theatre being given up to the Hanlon-Lees company and their pantomimic drama, which I have before alluded to. They brought their own admirable company of pantomimists, several of them being related to each other,—a peculiarity of pantomimic companies,— but they required a few additions. Mr. Penley represented an important acting character—the future *Charley's Aunt* not having been trained in a school where ground and lofty tumbling was an essential part of the teaching. As I said in my Autobiography, the Hanlon-Lees at the Gaiety revived the taste for pure pantomime, mixed with ingenious mechanical tricks that would have made poor old Grimaldi open his eyes with envy and astonishment. Omnibuses that turned over on the stage, spilling their passengers in every direction; Pullman cars that blew up with a comic explosion, and ceilings that allowed footmen to fall through them on to a dinner table, were not invented at the beginning of the century. The Hanlons were hard workers. What they presented at the Gaiety took at least two years in preparation.

From France to America was a wide jump, but I made it. I had an American season. I began it with a play of Mark Twain's, known in the United States as *The Gilded Age*. In England we called it *Colonel Sellers*, the name of the chief character, admirably represented by Mr. J. T. Raymond, since dead. The character was of the Micawber type. This was followed by Mr. and Mrs. Florence, in a

play of more dramatic pretension, called *The Mighty Dollar*. Mr. and Mrs. Florence were old favourites in England, and "Billy" Florence's picture of the "Hon. Bardwell Slote," a jobbing Congress-man in America, though an unfamiliar portrait in London, was recognised as a life-like and humorous impersonation. Mrs. Florence was always a clever comedy actress; and in this piece, Miss Constance Gilchrist (now the Countess of Orkney) was promoted to the position of a leading juvenile actress, and fully justified her promotion. To employ the members of my stock company, I took the "Imperial Theatre," as it was called, at the Royal Aquarium, and gave regular afternoon performances. Mr. Florence, off the stage, was one of the most justly popular men of his day. He was pleasant, genial, and an excellent friend. He was an honoured member of the best clubs in London and New York, and his sudden and unexpected death, about 1890, was regretted by a large and distinguished circle, and by no one more than myself, except, perhaps, the Duke of Beaufort.

During this American season, I was very glad to lend the theatre and my aid in organizing a benefit for the veteran playwright Mr. Maddison Morton, once a prolific writer of English farce, if often with a French foundation. The programme was supported by Mr. W. S. Gilbert, Mr. Toole, Mr. Arthur Cecil, Mr. George Grossmith, Mr. Corney Grain, "Dr." Arthur Sullivan, and the ever-active and undefeated Mrs. Keeley. Many distinguished amateurs also gave their assistance.

The Mighty Dollar was backed up by a short and clever burlesque of the *Corsican Brothers* (then playing at the Lyceum) by F. C. Burnand and Pottinger Stephens—what the French would call a *pièce de circonstance.* The chief feature was Mr. Royce's parody of Mr. Irving. I apologised to my old friend, brother manager, and opposite neighbour, and presented him with the original crutch-stick, with a suitable inscription, which once belonged to Mr. King, the comedian, and was used by him when *The School for Scandal* was first produced and he appeared as "Sir Peter Teazle." A fine opportunity, for which there was a precedent, was offered to Mr. Henry Irving, but he did not avail himself of it. When Buckstone's burlesque of Albert Smith's *Mont Blanc* was being played at the Haymarket, a prominent actor of the company, Mr. Braid, was "made up" to represent the popular author and entertainer. One Saturday night Albert Smith put himself in Braid's dress, and every one at once noticed a visible falling off in the actor's imitation of the lecturer!

The first appearance of Ibsen on the English stage—an author who has given rise to so much latter-day controversy—was, as I have said before, at a Gaiety *matinée*, December 15th, 1880. The play was *Quicksands; or, The Pillars of Society*, translated and adapted by Mr. William Archer.

At Christmas, I reproduced the *Voyage en Suisse* with the Hanlon-Lees at the Imperial Theatre, and started my first three-act burlesque, the *Forty*

Thieves, by Robert Reece, at the Gaiety. This extension of burlesque (much abused) enabled me to give and work out a coherent story. The plan was enormously successful for so many years, and justified its trial. The Gaiety *matinées* went on simultaneously, with legitimate pieces, under the practical management of Miss Litton.

At the close of Miss Litton's *matinées* at the Gaiety, which covered a number of the old standard comedies, a children's company, well drilled and organized by Mr. Charles Bernard, represented a number of French comic operas. These *matinées* were varied by a trial performance of a drama founded by Messrs. Savile Clark and Du Terreaux on Mr. Moy Thomas's novel *A Fight for Life*, and the amateur performance of a burlesque called *Herne the Hunted*, written by William Yardley and Robert Reece. The cast comprised Messrs. Ashby Sterry, Allen, Maclean, Archie Wortley, C. W. Trollope, Knox Holmes, A. Bastard, Frank Miles, Captain Barrington Foote, Leslie Ward, H. St. Paul, J. Hardinge Giffard, Captain Gooch, W. Yardley, Miss Fortescue, Mrs. Cecil Clay, and Mrs. Livingstone Thompson. The proceeds—a considerable sum—were devoted to the Artists' Benevolent Fund.

The "Fires in Theatres" question again became prominent, and much official and semi-official correspondence ensued. I adopted my usual plan of appealing direct to the public in the form of paragraphs and advertisements. The following are

average specimens of my managerial policy and impudence :—

"ANTI-PANIC NOTICE.

"The Gaiety Theatre is more or less fireproof and detached, and opens into four streets. Apart from the stage exits, two in number, through one of which a stage coach might be driven, the front of the house has eight exits. The stall exits are along fireproof passages into the Strand and Exeter Street. The balcony and upper boxes have equal exits. The pit opens direct into Catherine Street, nearly on a level with the pavement. The gallery exit is down a stone staircase, eight feet wide, into Catherine Street; and every staircase is stone, in brick walls, and all passages and floors are iron and concrete. There are no oil lamps in the passages to add to the danger of fire, but the gas is supplied and checked by eight separate and distinct meters. The two magnificent extra exits communicating with staircases in another building, which were closed some years ago by one of our infamous molly-coddling Licensing Acts of Parliament, still remain closed. The grand staircase is more than forty yards from the stage.

"During the last fifty-three years in England, Ireland, and Scotland, fourteen London theatres and nine provincial theatres have been destroyed, but not one member of the public has been burned. The only deaths from fire in these cases have been two—a manager and a dresser.

"NOTICE.—One hundred and sixty millions of London playgoers have passed harmlessly through the London theatres during the last fifty years, without a single death from fire, although thirteen metropolitan theatres have been burnt down in that period. The Brooklyn bogie, although it may lead to panic legislation, has not affected the minds of London actuaries. Not a single fire premium on a theatre has been increased to the extent of twopence. Some such statement as this is necessary, as, consequent upon the publication of evidence now being given before a Parliamentary Committee, the alarmist heading 'Fires in Theatres' has become part of the stereotyped stock of our leading journals.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

We wound up 1881 by producing in the autumn the second of the three-act burlesques. The subject was *Whittington*, and the author F. C. Burnand. At Christmas we produced number three, the author being Reece, and the subject *Aladdin*.

My troubles as a manager, like managerial troubles at the present time, were largely due to outside and irresponsible critics. The title of the Gaiety had its advantages and disadvantages. It commended itself to people seeking a light entertainment after dinner, though they often found a heavy one. It drew the attention of the Amateur Scavengers and Anointed Mudlarks of the Impuritan Party, and led to letters like the following :—

AMATEUR SCAVENGERS

"SIR,—

"As one who is interested in the question of high-class dramatic art both on the stage and as regards the comfort and convenience of the audience, I hope you will permit me to call your attention to the following facts:—You are doubtless aware that many families of position are prevented from frequenting theatres on the grounds that persons of doubtful moral character can obtain admission. It has always been my opinion that the presence of ladies of position is the surest means of maintaining the tone of places of amusement, and I am informed that managers of high-class theatres endeavour as far as possible to regulate admission to their houses so as to secure this tone. During the last month I have twice taken stalls at the Gaiety Theatre with a party of four or five friends; on each occasion I have been seated by the side of women who should not have been there. I feel myself obliged to protest against the admission to the best seats of the house of persons whose object is not amusement, but business, and whose manners and appearance are an annoyance to the respectable portion of the community. I have no doubt that mistakes cannot always be avoided by managers, but that such persons should be habitually admitted to your theatre would be quite enough to oblige me to keep away. I have no doubt that I represent the feelings of many ladies who hesitate to apply to you, and who feel as I do, that the amusement and pleasure of the evening are rendered distasteful by such scenes as

I witnessed last night, however covertly they may be conducted.

"With every apology for calling your attention to these unpleasant details, I enclose my card, and remain, yours faithfully,

"M.

"MR. J. HOLLINGSHEAD.
"*March* 15, 1882."

To this communication I replied:—

"GAIETY THEATRE, STRAND,
"*March* 17, 1882.

"MADAME,—

"I am much obliged to you for your long letter. Theatrical managers have no power to sift and screen their audiences. If any breach of decorum is brought before them they can and would stop it, but beyond this they are powerless, unless they want to live in law and police courts. In all State theatres abroad no such power exists of improving audiences by force, and raising the drama at the point of the truncheon. In England we have no State theatres; all the State does is to suck as much taxes and rates from us as it can possibly get. From this theatre alone it draws about £1,000 a year.

"Yours very truly,
"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

I was not much troubled with the Pandemonium

Paving Company (Limited), and when I was I answered them.

In 1882 the burlesque three act series was continued with *Robin Hood* and *Valentine and Orson*, by Reece, being numbers four and five.

The French plays of 1882 began with Sarah Bernhardt, and were followed by M. Coquelin. The great French actor had got over his difficulty with the Comédie Française by undertaking not to play with Sarah Bernhardt. He was supported by several members of the Française company. The season was concluded with Madame Chaumont.

After the French plays came a week of Irish amateur acting, announced as "in aid of the families of men who have recently been murdered in Ireland for endeavouring to discharge their lawful obligations." Three weeks more were filled up by a revival of Stephens and Solomon's successful comic opera, *Billee Taylor*, until the return of the Gaiety company from their tour, which had included a third visit by Royal command to Yarmouth.

In the early part of March, 1883, F. C. Burnand's *Blue Beard*, number six of the three-act burlesques, was the Gaiety entertainment. Owing to existing contracts with French companies it could only be kept on ten weeks; but, during that time, it was the most successful money-producer of the whole six. It even out-distanced the *Forty Thieves*, which had the best story ever invented for burlesques and pantomimes. The debt owing by theatrical

managers to the nameless author of *Ali Baba* would nearly approach the financial obligations of the Sultan of Turkey. At the time *Blue Beard* was produced I had the largest company of "low comedians" ever gathered, in all probability, in one theatre. These were Mr. Edward Terry, Mr. W. Elton, Mr. E. W. Royce, Mr. John Dallas, Mr. Wyatt, Mr. H. Monkhouse, Mr. Robert Brough, Mr. T. Squires, Mr. Arthur Williams, Mr. W. Warde, and Mr. Henley. The whole eleven could not be used at the same time, but were kept out of well-paid idleness by acting the uncongenial parts of "understudies."

The history of my last two or three years at the Gaiety may be told very briefly. I had a severe attack of typhoid fever, caught, so I was assured, in my room at the theatre, and for a year or more afterwards I was conscious of a diminution of nerve and will-power. This, I am told, is a common after-effect of the disease; but the disease itself I looked upon as an impostor, compared with its sturdy brother, rheumatic fever. Amongst burlesques produced were *Camaralzaman*, by Burnand; *Our Helen*, by Reece; *Called There and Back*, by Herman Merivale; *Mazeppa*, by Burnand; *Very Little Hamlet*, by W. Yardley; and *The Vicar of Wide-Awakefield*, in which Arthur Roberts appeared, by Pottinger Stephens and W. Yardley.

I turned the Gaiety into a small joint-stock company without appealing to the public, and associated with it, for a time, the Empire Theatre in Leicester

DAVID JAMES

Square. My principal partner was Mr. H. Osborne O'Hagan, and no one could have behaved to me with more honour, liberality, and courtesy. He was the best "loser" I ever met, and in that respect even surpassed me.

Mr. J. L. Shine became associated with me in the management of the Gaiety, under the "company" proprietorship, and as every notice, advertisement, and letter did not bear the imprint of "Gaiety Theatre Company, Limited," but on the contrary the everlasting "John Hollingshead, Lessee and Manager," I was eventually held legally responsible for many corporate debts, and felt morally responsible for a good many more. The "company" was wound up and retired, leaving me in possession of the theatre, and I gave up its twin, the Empire, as I could not at that time persuade its chief proprietor to consent to its being turned into a music-hall. When, at last, it developed into this institution, it was manifestly only fulfilling its destiny.

At the close of 1884 I had to regret the sudden death at his post of one of my oldest and most faithful servants, George Moore, the stage door-keeper. He had occupied that position for sixteen years, and had been, so to speak, the guardian of a stage which, notwithstanding its flippant character, was the most strictly managed stage in London. I claim no virtue for this, it was only trade policy. A stage that might be open to all comers would mean a half-empty house. Stage idlers are even worse than the "free list."

At the close of 1885 I accepted my last burlesque at the Gaiety, and cast it with two or three important additions to the company. The subject was *Jack Sheppard*, and the authors were my old friends, Mr. Pottinger Stephens and Mr. William Yardley. They had both supplied pieces, and had helped to work the theatre during the past year and the year previous. Mr. Terry's long engagement having expired, I engaged Mr. David James and Mr. Fred Leslie, Miss Marion Hood, Miss Sylvia Grey, and others, Miss Farren, of course, remaining. Before the piece was produced I entered into a partnership with Mr. George Edwardes, and published my last Gaiety manifesto :—

"The Gaiety Theatre completes its Seventeenth Year to-day, Saturday, December 19th. Since I opened it, in 1868, it has only been closed eighteen weeks, or a little more than one week a year. As a set-off to this, the *matinées* have reached 959, a number equal to three extra years of nightly work. The receipts this year have been slightly under those of 1884, but in spite of the 'depression of trade,' the election fever, and other opposing forces, they have been above the receipts of the years 1870, '74, '75, and '77. The gross receipts for the seventeen years have been £675,000, or an average of £40,000 a year. If the Gaiety has done less for the cause of Art than one or two other houses that might be named, it has done more for the pockets of the 'profession' and those who live by theatres. No

other house in London can show such a record of unbroken work.

"JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD."

Before finally giving up the reins, I utilised the presence of a "Parsee Dramatic Company" in London, a very clever company, to give two short scenes from the oldest drama in the world, the *Sákuntalā of Kālidāsa.* This completed my seventeen years of "variety" showmanship in what I thought was a worthy manner. Very few actors, actresses, and authors during that seventeen years had not appeared or been represented on the Gaiety stage—the few exceptions proving the rule—and I was satisfied when I saw the curtain drop on the B.C. ancient legendary Eastern drama.

In the summer of 1886 I dissolved partnership with Mr. George Edwardes, and gave him, from that time, the sole control of the theatre. My last public appearance, of any importance, was when I took the chair at the banquet given by Mr. Edwardes and myself to the American actor, Mr. Henry Dixey, who came over with a company from America to play in a variety piece, called *Adonis*, at the Gaiety. More than three hundred representative people were present, and the American minister, Mr. Phelps, sat on my left hand. When Mr. Dixey heard that I was leaving the Gaiety, he was quite justified in assuming financial reasons, and he very generously made me a substantial offer of help without a

minute's delay, which I acknowledged most kindly, but did not accept.

I now come to what the accountants call RECAPITULATION. I have said that I went into the Gaiety Theatre with about £200 capital of my own, and that, from first to last, I have had about £120,000 out of it. I have said that the gross receipts for seventeen years were £675,000, or an average of close upon £40,000 a year. In that period the house was only closed eighteen weeks, or one week and a fraction a year. As a set-off to this there were 959 *matinées*—a number equal to over three extra years of nightly work. According to the great Irish mathematician—the O'Cocker—this makes twenty years' curtain-raising in seventeen years—the lesser containing the greater. In that period "the profession," and those who live by it, received about *One Million Sterling* from me, the Gaiety, and its various "chapels-of-ease" in town and country, for which they gave value. In that period something like *Five Hundred* pieces were produced (about one a fortnight), running through the whole *gamut* of dramatic art, English and French, not even forgetting German, and winding up with the oldest drama in the world, played in *Hindústani* by a Parsee company. During that period, as I have left on record, I produced thirty short burlesques, seven three-act burlesques, one Christmas piece in six acts, and twelve scenes, and two morning pantomimes—forty in all. This number (again according to Cocker)

H. E. DIXEY

is about eight per cent. of the whole of the Gaiety productions. In face of these figures, which are not of the kind given to us to conceal the state of our affairs, I am not entitled to pose as quite such a devout worshipper of the "Sacred Lamp" as my friends give me credit for. As the founder and manager of the *Greatest Variety Theatre in the World* (1868–1886), I could hardly claim to have been supported by only one branch (certainly an important branch) of entertainment; but it is as difficult to get clear of a joke as it is to overtake a lie when it has once started.

The benefits inside the Gaiety Theatre, during the same period, were at least fifty in number—public, private, and charitable—realizing at least £25,000, without counting the Gaiety efforts at other theatres. Even the gentle art of grinning through a horse-collar can be made useful.

In various parts of this book I have stated pretty freely what my financial operations were, and I believe I was the first manager who thus took the public into his confidence. I never had a "backer," and I never worked with a "syndicate," although my own friends, and the friends of the theatre, were numerous, wealthy, and distinguished. When I parted company with the few early friends who formed a little "company" to support me at my opening, I acted honourably by them, or tried to do so. My second "company" venture left me with many debts of honour, which I had to pay. The limited liability acts rarely cover a theatrical di-

rector. From first to last I was *sole lessee and manager*. The words meant what they professed to mean. My friend and landlord, Mr. Lionel Lawson, put me in that position, and kept me there up to the day of his untimely death in 1879—a period of eleven years—but he was never, in any sense, my "backer." His belief in me was sound and well rewarded. Whatever I borrowed of him, I always repaid; and, at his death, he owed me about £1,100, which the trustees recognised.

As a *Booth* in *Vanity Fair* the *Gaiety* did its work and received its reward. Its policy was to excite attention at any cost—the true secret of theatrical advertisement. It sometimes had to suffer for the sins of others. As far back as 1882 it incurred the grave displeasure of the *Saturday Review*, because *Punch* had called Rabelais a "dirty old blackguard." I was writing a good deal for *Punch* at that time, and its editor, Mr. Burnand, was writing a good deal for the theatre. Hence this vinegar. I had, of course, to "put on the gloves." This is very unfair, I said, to the Gaiety, which probably has quite as much *Pantagruelism* in its management as the *Saturday Review* can boast. In ably defending Rabelais the *Saturday Review* uses words which, with the slightest alteration, can be applied to this theatre with as much propriety as to the author.

"In the fountain of its wisdom and wit we each find that we have the power of finding; there is poetry for one, philosophy for another, humour for

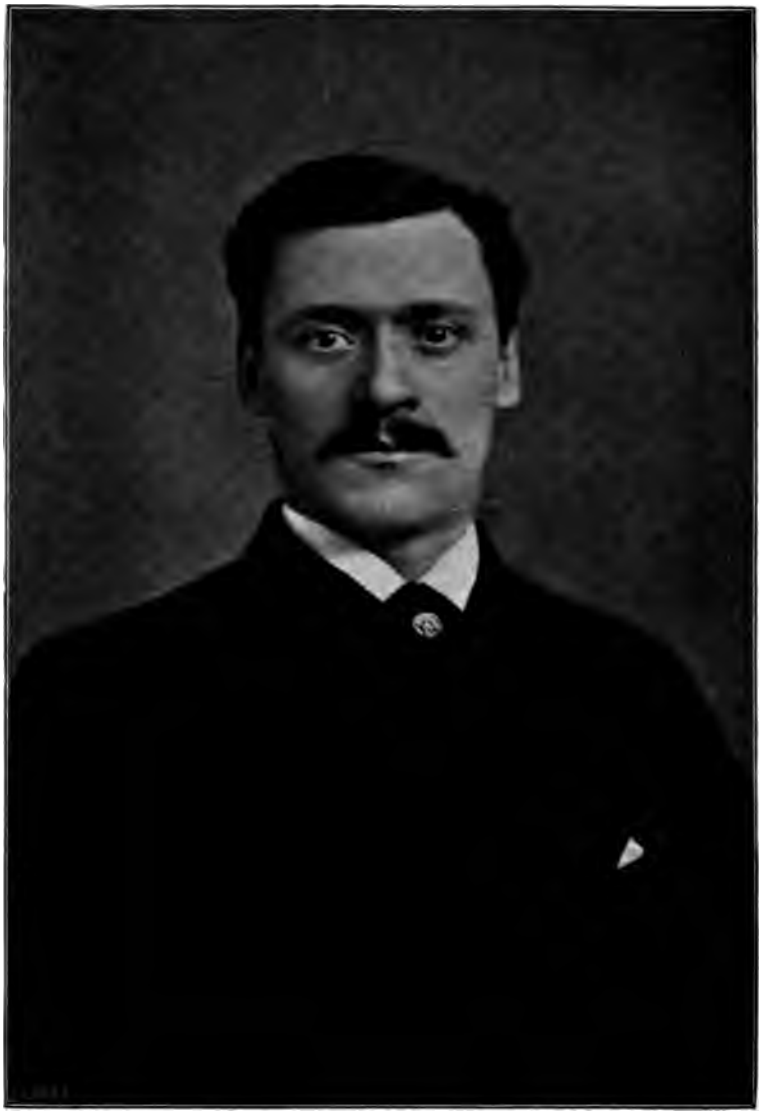
GEORGE EDWARDES

a third, learning, prophecy, style for others. And some there are who can draw nothing but mud, and dirt, and wine on the lees from the fountain, and therefore think themselves superior persons, and pity the rest of the world as mashers."

The success of *Jack Sheppard*, the last of the old Gaiety burlesques, led to a long engagement of Mr. Fred Leslie by my successor, Mr. George Edwardes. This burlesque was first of all sent to the country, and with its successors—notably *Monte Cristo Junior*, *Frankenstein*, *Carmen Up to Date*, *Ruy Blas* or *The Blasé Roué*, etc.—it made the tour of America and Australia. The authors of these pieces, and others, were the two clever gentlemen who write under the *nom de théâtre* of "Richard, Henry," and Mr. G. R. Sims (a poet, a dramatist, a novelist, and a journalist), and it is one of the *secrets de Polcheinelle* that these bright writers are the chief contributors to the *Referee*. On my withdrawal from the theatre, Mr. George Edwardes, in conjunction with Mr. H. J. Leslie, produced a comic opera, called *Dorothy*, founded on a Charles the Second comedy by Mrs. Aphra Behn, the writing being by Mr. B. C. Stephenson, and the music by the late Alfred Cellier. The piece was admirably cast. It brought out Miss Marie Tempest and Mr. Hayden Coffin; it had the inestimable advantage of Mr. Ben Davies's robust and agreeable tenor voice, and the gagging powers and humour of Mr. Arthur Williams and the late Harriet Coveney. For some hidden reason it was not a financial

success at the Gaiety. Perhaps the *genius loci* was offended, or the "mashers" were dissatisfied? It was removed to the new Prince of Wales's Theatre in Coventry Street, and its "luck" was almost immediately changed. It earned a fortune. Mr. George Edwardes reverted to burlesque at the Gaiety; sent his old company again to America and Australia, gathered new people and new authors round him, and produced a most profitable series of "up-to-date" burlettas, to which he gave the new name of "Musical Comedy."

Fred Leslie, who remained a member of the Gaiety company up to the time of his early death, was essentially a "variety" *artiste* of the highest kind. When I engaged him for a leading part in *Jack Sheppard* (Miss E. Farren playing the title part), I regarded him as a possible "Entertainer" in the future. I spoke to him about an Entertainment of the Albert Smith kind, and he was favourably impressed with the idea, only regretting that he was not a pianist. When he came back from America, after his first visit, he had learnt something from Mr. Henry Dixey (the American variety actor I have before alluded to), mostly of a tricky character, which became useful to him in the Gaiety pieces of the "variety" type. Fred Leslie had in him the making of an actor. He was seen at his artistic best in an opera like Planquette's *Rip Van Winkle*, but he had more scope for "irresponsible" farce in his Gaiety embodiments. He was gentlemanly and unassuming, and popular with all classes.



FRED LESLIE

His unexpected and regretted death, coupled with the painful illness of his professional companion, Nellie Farren, was a serious loss to the English Theatre.

The estimation in which Nellie Farren is held by the public, and the broad sympathy expressed for her in her illness, took a fitting and substantial form on the 17th of March, 1898, in a gigantic Benefit at Drury Lane Theatre, organized by Mr. George Edwardes. Every member of the dramatic profession took part in the stage entertainment, and the General Committee was headed by the Duke of Beaufort, the Duke of Fife, the Duke of Newcastle, the Earl of Hardwicke, the Earl of Durham, the Earl of Londesborough, the Earl of Kilmorey, Lord Alington, Lord Archibald Campbell, Lord Rothschild, Lord Russell (the Lord Chief Justice), Lord Farquhar, Sir Edward Lawson, Sir Blundell Maple, Sir Henry Irving, Sir Edward Clarke, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Sir Squire Bancroft, Sir Douglas Straight, and every theatrical manager in London. The Benefit was under the special patronage of the Prince of Wales, and both the Prince and Princess sent substantial subscriptions. The receipts and subscriptions were over £7,000, and such an enthusiastic demonstration has probably never been equalled in a Metropolitan Theatre. This demonstration may or may not have been meant as a vote of admiration for that Gaiety Burlesque of the past which is now in a state of suspended animation, but it was so

regarded by, at least, one very eminent dramatic critic, who was moved to assert that Gaiety Burlesque is the National Drama of Modern England.

The recipient of this great and necessary Benefit, Miss Ellen Farren, sometimes called Nellie and sometimes Nellie Farren, and sometimes called "Our Nellie," comes of a good theatrical stock, her father being Henry Farren, a son of the elder Farren, the celebrated comedian. Henry Farren, unlike his brother William, was rather wild and eccentric, and though he possessed quite his full share of the family talent, his theatrical career was somewhat broken and uncertain. Nellie Farren probably had the usual scrappy education given as a rule to the children of actors, especially in the later forties and early fifties, and at a youthful age (as I have said before) she found herself on the stage of the Victoria Theatre in the New Cut, Lambeth.

Miss E. Farren owed much of her stage training to Mr. Horace Wigan, the manager of the old Olympic Theatre in the early sixties. Like his brother, Mr. Alfred Wigan, Horace Wigan was not a genial director—he appeared to have been soured in his youth, and hated his brother. His brother, I am bound to say, returned the family antipathy. He was a good friend to Miss Nellie Farren, and in this he was always seconded by Mr. Tom Taylor, the stock author of the theatre. They pushed her forward in various forms and characters, some of them very experimental, and some rather eccentric. She played a

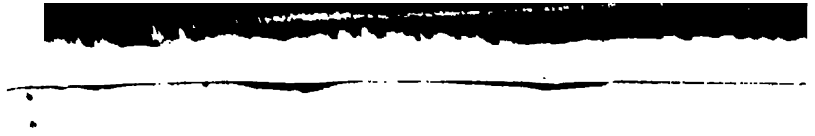
half-daft boy in an Irish drama, and was allowed to masquerade as the "Clown" in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, singing most of the original music. Burlesque was produced for her, and she had every opportunity of showing her quality as a "principal boy."

Miss E. Farren, when she began her long career at the Gaiety, with her great and peculiar talent for burlesque, easily reigned supreme in that costly form of entertainment. After "Robert" she appeared in *Columbus*, *Aladdin* (*opéra-bouffe*), *The Forty Thieves* (two or three versions), *Little Don Cæsar*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Esmeralda*, *The Bohemian G'yurl*, *Blue Beard*, *Rip Van Winkle*, *Sonnambula*, *Robbing Roy*, *Princess of Trebizonde* (*opéra-bouffe*), *Little Dr. Faust*, *Ariel*, *Gulliver*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Camaralzaman*, *Jack Sheppard*, and a score of others—the best works of their kind, of Frank Burnand, Reece, Yardley, Stephens, and Henry J. Byron. I have not named one-half, and have put them down haphazard from memory. There were forty burlesques in all out of the 500 pieces produced during those eighteen years at the "Theatre Royal Treadmill." She played (as I have before recorded) with Mr. Toole, Miss Loseby, and one company; she played with Mr. Edward Terry, Mr. Royce, Miss Kate Vaughan, and another company; and she played with the late Fred Leslie, the late David James, Miss Marion Hood, and another company. She always maintained her exceptional position and was a hard and steady

worker. She hated "understudies," and never gave them a chance, if she could help it. She had her few chances on what may, perhaps, be considered a higher plane, and appeared with Phelps in *The Hypocrite*, in Congreve's *Love for Love*, Vanbrugh's *Relapse*, Meilhac and Halévy's *La Cigale*, and a number of established farces. Whatever she did showed intelligence and dramatic instinct, but her reputation is chiefly connected with extravaganza, probably because she was tied for the best part of her life to the Gaiety Theatre. She repeated her old triumphs in many excellent burlesques produced by Mr. George Edwardes, and went twice on an extended tour practically round the world under his energetic management. She ought to go down to theatrical posterity as the best "principal boy" ever seen upon the stage since Sir William Davenant introduced ladies in the drama in the reign of Charles II.

The disease with which she is afflicted is due probably to something in her constitution which first showed itself after she had only been four or five years at the Gaiety. This was a spinal affection that kept her practically bedridden for several weeks, and which, rightly or wrongly, was attributed to a sprain or rick that arose from gymnastic dancing. Her career has been limited, but brilliant, and the memory of her galvanic vitality and agreeable presence will long be cherished by the "Gaiety boys" of all classes to-day, and handed down

ELLEN FARREN



among the best traditions of the stage to the "boys" that will come after them.

The somewhat defiant management of the Gaiety Theatre, and the success secured by the policy of the *Industrious Apprentice*, failed to commend that harmless place of amusement to people of all classes. Its festive title, which, unfortunately, was not always justified by its productions, gave it a character amongst that very well-meaning, commonplace, highly respectable, and generally stupid class, who are too often found amongst the supporters of the Nonconformist conscience. Amongst these people the theatre generally was not much beloved, while that particular playhouse was honestly looked upon as a perfect sink of iniquity. "Ichabod" was plainly written on its brazen front, illuminated by the best gas or electric device that the Messrs. Defries & Sons could supply. The sins of ancient Babylon were revived within its gilded walls, but the destruction which ought to follow such sins in various forms of volcanic disturbance was evidently a long time coming.

A chance came at last to punish the High Priest of this reputed disreputable temple. I consented to be put up as a member of the Reform Club in Pall Mall—a club existing largely on a bygone political reputation. I had been connected with several leading Liberal journals, was the fighting contributor to the *Financial Reformer* at Liverpool, and had carried the principles of philosophical Radicalism into magazines that were edited by Conservatives

and political sentimentalists. For these injuries inflicted on a so-called Liberal party—a party that was soon to invent that pale, washed-out, whitey-brown rag of party Government called the "Liberal Unionist"—I was just the man to be righteously blackballed at the Reform Club, and was blackballed accordingly. I was supported by the late John Bright and his friends, who knew me as a journalist, but I was defeated by the Nonconformist section of the club—the war-cry being "Anti-Gaiety." This would have been a fair and proper, if a narrow-minded cry, but for one important fact. The chief man who raised it and headed the opposition—a man of great political earnestness, and equally great and unobtrusive charity—was a maker, amongst other things, of pink silk tights, and at that particular moment I had six hundred pounds worth of these fascinating articles, stamped with the name of his trading firm, to be used, in due course, in my hateful business. I might use the words (slightly altered) of Madame Roland, and say, "Oh, Liberalism! what follies are committed in thy name!" but I prefer to give a quotation from Randolph's *Muse's Looking-Glass*—a work publised in the early part of the seventeenth century. The dialogue is between "Mrs. Flowerdew and Bird," two Puritans, who serve the theatre with their wares:—

"*Flow.* It was a zealous prayer I heard a brother make concerning playhouses.

Bird. For charity, what is 't?

Flow. That the Globe [one of Shakespeare's

houses], wherein (quoth he) reigns a whole world of vice, had been consumed; the Phœnix burnt to ashes; the Fortune [Alleyne's playhouse] whipt for a blind w——; Black-Fryers [another of Shakespeare's houses]. He wonders how it 'scaped demolishing i' the time of Reformation; lastly, he wished the Bull might cross the Thames to the Bear-Garden, and there be soundly baited.

Bird. A good prayer.

Flow. Indeed, it sometimes pricks my conscience. I come to sell them pins and looking-glasses.

Bird. I have their custom, too, for all their feathers; 'tis fit that we which are sincere professors should gain by infidels."

It is something for a busy theatrical manager to be able to say that during twenty years, and more, he only received one abusive anonymous letter. This letter, though neither elegant in words and penmanship, nor truthful in statements, is worth preserving, although, unfortunately, it cannot be quite given in its original straightforward simplicity:—

"Your women are all [*Bona Robas*], and you are a ole —— [the word represented by another dash is described in Bailey's Old English Dictionary, as "a term of endearment, common amongst sailors"].

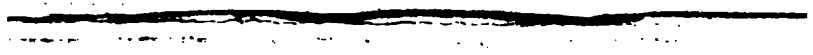
Anonymous abuse was scarce, substantial praise was scarcer.

During twenty-one years of active management at the Gaiety and the Alhambra, I managed somehow to escape "testimonials." Pieces of plate,

tea-services, rings, and scarf-pins were in the air, but, like regulation "benefits," they fell in the lap of the actors, and not of the manager. One present, almost forced upon me, was an exception—a remarkable exception, and made even more remarkable by its giver.

A poor woman employed in the theatre as a cleaner was grateful for some little kindness shown her during an illness, and she sent a message through the housekeeper to know if I would kindly accept a "keepsake." It had been in her family for years, was of little saleable value, and was more suitable for a gentleman like myself (erroneously supposed to be "learned") than for a poor working-woman. I accepted the gift. It was an oblong engraved gem with circular ends, about the size of a large almond, the stone being jasper or cornelian, and the engraving in a tongue quite unfamilar to me, being clear-cut and in perfect preservation. I had it identified by experts, and it proved to be a Gnostic Gem of the second century. The inscription was in Zend, Chaldee, and old Greek, and was an invocation addressed to some mysterious power. It was one of the gems known to have been used by the Gnostic priests, and belonged to a small group of about four which during nearly seventeen hundred years have come down to the museums of Europe. The value of the gem intrinsically was three or four pounds; the romance attached to it was infinite. Its preservation through those ages of time was a mystery never

to be solved. From the priest of the second century it had been handed down (through what channels?) to a playhouse servant of the nineteenth century, and by her to the manager of the Gaiety Theatre.



LIST OF PIECES

PERFORMED AT THE GAIETY THEATRE UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF MR. JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD, 1868–1886, WITH DATES OF FIRST PERFORMANCE AT THAT THEATRE

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1868			
Dec. 21	The Two Harlequins	Operetta in 1 Act	M. E. Jonas (English words by Gilbert à Beckett).
,, 21	On the Cards	Comedy-drama in 3 Acts	Adapted from L'Escamoteur by Alfred Thompson.
,, 21	Robert the Devil ...	Operatic Extravaganza ...	W. S. Gilbert.
1869			
Mar. 27	Dreams	Drama in 5 Acts	T. W. Robertson.
April 19	An Eligible Villa ...	Operetta	Music by M. Gastenel.
May 17	Columbus; or, the Original Pitch in a Merry Key	Extravaganza	Alfred Thompson.
,, 17	Two in the Morning...	Farce	Adapted from the French.
,, 29	The Lucky Friday ...	Comedietta	—
July 13	Good for Nothing ...	Comic Drama...	John B. Buckstone.
,, 26	An Old Score	Comedy-drama in 3 Acts	W. S. Gilbert.
	Lischen and Fritzchen	Operetta	Offenbach.
Sept. 13	Linda of Chamouni; or not a Formosa	Burlesque...	Alfred Thompson.
Oct. 11	A Life Chase	Drama in 5 Acts	John Oxenford and Horace Wigan.
Nov. 1	Fleurette	Operetta	Tamplin.
,, 8	The Rose of Auvergne	Operetta	Offenbach.
Dec. 13	Uncle Dick's Darling	Drama in 3 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
,, 20	Wat Tyler, M.P. ...	Burlesque...	G. A. Sala.
1870			
	The Happy Village	Operetta Pasticcio	—
Mar. 12	The First Night ...	—	From the French.
	Young Hopeful ...	—	From the French.

LIST OF PIECES

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1870			
April 12	The King's Pleasure (Amateur Performance)	Drama in 1 Act	Alfred Thompson.
,, 16	The Princess of Trebizonde	Comic Opera-drama in 3 Acts	Offenbach (adapted by Charles Lamb Kenney).
May 7	The Man of Quality...	Comedy	Adapted by John Hollingshead from Sir John Vanbrugh's "The Relapse; or, Virtue in Danger."
	Poor Nobleman ...	French origin	
	Bachelor of Arts ...	French origin	
July 4	The Courier of Lyons	Romantic Drama	Charles Reade.
Aug. 22	Peter Spyk	Comic Drama	J. R. Planché.
,, 22	Dolly	Comic Opera	Music by Adolphe Adam.
,, 22	Trombalcazar	Musical Extravaganza ...	Offenbach (adapted by C. H. Stephenson).
,, 29	Blue Beard...	Comic Operatic Extravaganza	Offenbach.
Sept. 5	The Quaker	Ballet-opera	Dibdin.
,, 15	The Beggar's Opera...	—	Gay.
,, 25	Betly	Comic Opera	Donizetti.
Oct. 8	Zampa	Opera in 3 Acts	Herold.
Nov. 19	The Waterman... ...	Musical Farce...	T. Dibdin.
,, 24	Fra Diavolo	Opera	Auber.
,, 24	Michel and Christine	Operetta	Lecocq.
Dec. 24	Aladdin the Second ...	Operatic Extravaganza ...	Alfred Thompson. Music by Hervé.
,, 24	A Christmas Story ...	Musical Drama in 3 Acts	Dion Boucicault.
1871			
Jan. 24	Bardell *v.* Pickwick (Royal Dramatic College Fund Benefit)	Dramatic Sketch	John Hollingshead.
	Dr. Davy	—	From the German.
	Dot...	—	Dion Boucicault.
March 1	Wait and Hope... ...	Drama in 3 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
,, 11	Our Clerks...	Comic Drama in 1 Act ...	Tom Taylor.
,, 18	Birthplace of Podgers	Farce	John Hollingshead.
April 1	Off the Line	Farce	Clement Scott.
March 18	Bombastes Furioso ...	Burlesque Opera	Rhodes.
,, 26	Magic Toys	Ballet Farce	J. Oxenford.
April 8	Malala	Extravaganza	Offenbach.
March 26	Steeple Chase	Farce	Williams.
,, 26	Paul Pry	Farce	Poole.
April 3	Loan of a Lover ...	Vaudeville	J. R. Planché.
,, 4	Young Widow	Farce	J. T. G. Rodwell.
,, 5	Rough Diamond ...	Comic Drama	J. B. Buckstone.
,, 5	Spitalfields Weaver ...	Drama	C. Lamb Kenney.

PERFORMED AT THE GAIETY

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1871			
April 15	A Mere Blind	Operetta	Offenbach.
,, 15	Peter the Shipwright	Opera in 3 Acts	Lortzing.
,, 29	Grand Duchess... ...	Comic Opera	Offenbach.
May 6	Child of the Regiment	Comic Opera	Donizetti.
,, 13	No Song, No Supper	—	Prince Hoare.
June 7	Not such a Fool as he looks*	Comedy	Henry J. Byron.
,, 7	Our Mutual Friend *	—	H. B. Farnie.
,, 14	Letty, the Basketmaker	Comic Opera	Balfe.
July 1	La Chanson de Fortunio	Operetta	Offenbach.
,, 1	Les Bavards	—	—
,, 8	Les Chevaliers de la Table Ronde	—	Hervé.
	Robert the Devil ...	Operatic Burlesque... ...	Gilbert.
,, 18	La Belle Hélène ...	Opera Bouffe	Offenbach.
,, 29	Le Canard à Trois Becs	Opera Bouffe	E. Jonas.
Aug. 1	Hamlet	Tragedy	Shakespeare.
,, 4	Lady of Lyons	Drama	Lord Lytton.
,, 4	The Thumping Legacy	Farce	John Maddison Morton.
,, 5	Othello	Tragedy	Shakespeare.
,, 7	Louis the Eleventh ...	Romantic Drama	Dion Boucicault.
,, 7	The Royal Galatea Burlesque	"A Humorous Trifle" ...	Lieutenant Powe, R.N.
,, 10	As you Like it	Comedy	Shakespeare.
,, 12	A New Way to Pay Old Debts	—	Tom Taylor and Aug. W. Dubourg.
,, 15	Guy Mannering ...	Musical Drama	Music by Sir Henry Bishop.
,, 18	The Honeymoon ...	Comedy	John Tobin.
Sept. 11	Donna Diana	Comedy	Dr. Westland Marston.
,, 16	The Serious Family...	Comedy in 3 Acts	Morris Barnett.
,, 23	Cinderella the Younger	Extravaganza in 3 Acts ...	Alfred Thompson. Music by Emile Jonas.
Oct. 11	Mariage aux Lanternes	Opera Bouffe in 1 Act ...	Offenbach.
,, 11	The Matchmaker ...	Comedy in 2 Acts	C. S. Cheltnam.
,, 23	La Belle Hélène ...	Comic Opera	English version by C. Lamb Kenney.
Oct. 28	Frilled Petticoats ...	Comic Drama in 2 Acts...	Lewis C. Lyne.
,, 28	Charms	Comedy-drama	Sir Charles F. Young.
Nov. 2	Love for Love	Comedy	Congreve—Edited by John Hollingshead.
,, 18	Betsy Baker	Farce	J. Maddison Morton.
,, 19	Night and Morning...	Drama in 1 Act	Dion Boucicault.
	Betty Martin... ...	Farce	Dion Boucicault.

* "Paddy Green" Testimonial Fund.

LIST OF PIECES

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1871			
Nov. 23	Sergeant Buzfuz ...	—	Charles Dickens.
,, 23	Ici on parle Français	Farce	Williams.
,, 27	Flic and Floc	Ballet	German.
,, 27	Good for Nothing ...	Comic Drama	J. B. Buckstone.
,, 29	Night and Morning ...	Drama	Adapted by Dio Boucicault.
,, 29	To Parents & Guardians	Comic Drama	Tom Taylor.
Dec. 4	Elfie; or, The Cherry Tree Inn	Drama in 3 Acts	Dion Boucicault.
,, 26	Dearer than Life ...	Drama in 3 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
,, 26	Thespis among the Olympians	Operatic Extravaganza ...	W. S. Gilbert an Arthur Sullivan.
1872			
Jan. 13	Cox and Box	Comic Operetta	Music by Arthur Su livan.
,, 20	Ganymede and Galatea	Comic Opera	Music by Franz vo Suppé.
Mar. 16	Les Deux Aveugles ...	Operetta	Offenbach.
,, 25	The Ladies' Battle *	Comedy	T. W. Robertson.
,, 25	The Hunchback * ...	Drama	Sheridan Knowles.
April 1	Shilly-Shally	Comedy in 3 Acts	Charles Reade an Anthony Trollope
,, 13	The Miller of Millberg	Comic Opera	Meyer Lutz.
,, 20	Turning the Tables ...	Farce	Poole.
May 2	Psychic Force † ...	Musical Sketch	Offenbach.
,, 2	The Pretty Horse-breaker †	Farce	William Brough an Andrew Halliday.
,, 2	Domestic Economy †	Farce	Mark Lemon.
,, 11	Genevieve de Brabant	Comic Opera	Offenbach.
	The Colleen Bawn ...	Drama	Dion Boucicault.
,, 13	The Virginian Mummy	Farce	C. White.
	Night and Morning ...	—	Dion Boucicault.
	Arrah-na-Pogue ...	Drama	Dion Boucicault.
June 8	Isaac of York	Burlesque...	—
,, 8	Doctor Davey	—	—
,, 22	A Love Test	Farce	Lisle.
,, 22	The Old Forge	Drama in 3 Acts	Charles Osborne.
July 8	John Bull	Comedy	Geo. Colman.
,, 13	The Burgomaster's Daughter	Operetta	—
,, 15	A Virginian Mummy	Farce	—
,, 15	The Two Blinds ...	Operetta	Offenbach.
Aug. 31	Good News	Drama in 3 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
Sept. 14	Ali Baba à la Mode ...	Operatic Extravaganza ...	Robert Reece.
Oct. 7	A Curious Case ...	Comic Drama	—
,, 7	The Critic	Burlesque Drama	Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

* Miss Ada Cavendish's benefit.

† Mr. J. L. Toole's benefit.

PERFORMED AT THE GAIETY

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1872			
Oct. 21	Used Up	Comic Drama	Charles Mathews.
Nov. 9	The Ebony Casket; or, Mabel's Two Birthdays	Drama in 4 Acts	T. W. Speight.
,, 11	Married for Money ...	Comedy in 3 Acts	Charles Mathews.
,, 11	The Dancing Barber	—	—
,, 18	Cool as a Cucumber	Farce	Blanchard Jerrold.
,, 18	The Magic Fife ...	Operetta	Offenbach.
,, 23	Debt	Comedy in 2 Acts	E. A. de Pass.
,, 23	The Wager	Comic Opera in 2 Acts ...	J. A. Kappey.
,, 25	Game of Speculation	Comedy	George Henry Lewes.
,, 25	My Wife's Relations	Comedietta	Walter Gordon.
Dec. 2	Love à la Mode... ...	Farce	Macklin.
,, 14	Awaking	Drama in 1 Act	Campbell Clarke.
,, 26	Trotty Veck	Drama in 2 Acts	Mrs. Charles Calvert.
1873			
Feb. 8	A Nice Girl	Comedietta	Moy Thomas.
,, 17	Don Giovanni in Venice	Operatic Extravaganza ...	R. Reece.
Mar. 1	Fleurette	Operetta	Augustus L. Tamplin.
,, 8	The Wizard of the Wilderness	Farce	Robert Reece.
,, 22	Your Life's in Danger	Farce	J. Maddison Morton.
April 1	Maritana	Opera	Music by Wallace.
,, 3	Sweethearts and Wives	Comedy	C. Lamb Kenney.
,, 5	That Blessed Baby ...	Farce	J. Geo. Moore.
,, 14	Martha	Burlesque	Robert Reece.
,, 14	The Prisoner of War	Drama	Douglas Jerrold.
,, 26	The Bohemian Girl ...	Opera	Music by Balfe.
May 10	Lily of Killarney ...	Opera	Music by Sir Julius Benedict.
,, 17	Fleur de Lys	Comic Opera	Farnie and Delibes.
,, 26	The Liar	Comedy	Foote.
,, 26	Patter *v.* Clatter ...	Farce	Charles Mathews.
,, 26	A Pretty Piece of Business	Farce	J. Maddison Morton.
June 30	Snaefel	Drama in 3 Acts	Paul Meritt and Henry Spry.
Aug. 14	Bibb and Tucker ...	Comedy in 2 Acts	Adapted by John Clayton.
Sept. 3	Seeing Toole	Farce	John Hollingshead and R. Reece.
,, 8	Our own Antony and Cleopatra	"An Absurdity"	F. C. Burnand.
,, 29	Mr. Gatherwool ...	Farce	Charles Mathews.
,, 29	The Village Torment	Ballet	—
,, 29	The Fast Coach ...	Farce	R. Soutar.
Oct. 6	If I had a Thousand a Year	Farce	Charles Mathews.
,, 18	Aggravating Sam ...	Farce	Mathews & Co.

LIST OF PIECES

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOS
1873			
Oct. 18	Little Toddlekins ...	Farce...	Charles Mathews.
,, 25	Which is Which ...	Comedietta	Theyre Smith.
,, 25	On Strike	Domestic Drama	Arthur à Beckett.
,, 25	The Happy Land ...	—	—
Nov. 10	Do-Ri-Mi-Fa	Operetta	Offenbach.
,, 10	Retained for the Defence	Farce	Oxenford.
,, 10	La Fille de Madame Angot (Another Version)	Opera Bouffe	H. B. Farnie Lecocq.
Dec. 15	The Hypocrite	Comedy	Isaac Bickerstaffe.
,, 15	Clever Sir Jacob ...	Comedietta	Paul Grave.
,, 26	The Battle of Life ...	Drama in 3 Acts	Charles Dickens.
1874			
Jan. 14	Fiz-Gig	Ballet	—
,, 14	Guy Fawkes	Burlesque...	Henry J. Byron.
Feb. 14	The Rivals	Comedy	Richard Brins Sheridan.
,, 23	Much too Clever ...	Farce	John Oxenford a Joseph Hatton.
Mar. 7	The School for Scandal	Comedy	Richard Brins Sheridan.
April 6	The Great Metropolis	Extravaganza	F. C. Burnand.
,, 6	The Clandestine Marriage	Comedy	George Colman a David Garrick.
,, 20	Rob Roy	Drama	Walter Scott and T
May 2	A Dodge for a Dinner	Farce	T. A. Palmer.
,, 2	Eldorado	"Folie Musicale"	H. B. Farnie.
,, 16	Nemesis	—	—
,, 18	Taking by Storm ...	Farce	Frank Churchill.
,, 18	The Busybody	Comedy	Susannah Centlivr
,, 23	Clancarty	Drama in 4 Acts	Tom Taylor.
June 6	The Belle's Stratagem*	Comedy	Cowley.
,, 6	The Rough Diamond*	Comic Drama	J. B. Buckstone.
,, 6	Second Thoughts*	Comedietta	Lord Burghclere.
,, 15	A Nice Firm	Drama	Tom Taylor.
,, 15	Happy Family	Farce	Tom Taylor.
July 1	Led Astray	Drama in 6 Acts	Dion Boucicault.
Aug. 31	Two Beggars	Opera Bouffe	Offenbach.
Sept. 14	The Island of Bachelors	Opera Bouffe	Robert Reece, M by Lecocq.
,, 24	Love Apple	Operetta	Offenbach.
Nov. 4	Oil and Vinegar ...	Comedy in 2 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
,, 23	Matrimonial Moral ...	Farce	Henry J. Byron.
,, 28	Giroflé-Girofla	Opera Bouffe	Music by Lecocq.
Dec. 19	The Merry Wives of Windsor	Comedy	Shakespeare.

* Miss Kate Santley's Benefit.

PERFORMED AT THE GAIETY

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1874			
Dec. 19	Bengal Tiger	Comic Drama	Charles Dance.
1875			
Jan. 2	Money	Comedy	Bulwer Lytton.
,, 23	She Stoops to Conquer	Comedy	Oliver Goldsmith.
Feb. 15	A Midsummer Night's Dream	Comedy	Shakespeare.
Mar. 20	The Fast Coach ...	Farce	C. J. Claridge and Robt. Soutar.
,, 27	Rose Michel	Drama in 5 Acts	Campbell Clarke.
April 5	The Stranger	Drama	From the German of Kotzebue.
,, 5	London Assurance ...	Comedy	Dion Boucicault.
,, 10	La Perichole	Opera Bouffe	Offenbach.
,, 10	Trial by Jury	Dramatic Cantata	W. S. Gilbert, Mus. by Arthur Sullivan.
,, 10	The Tempest	Comedy	Shakespeare.
,, 26	Much Ado about Nothing	Comedy	Shakespeare.
,, 26	A Nice Girl	Farce	—
May 15	Les Mousquetaires de la Reine	Comic Opera (French) ...	Music by Halévy.
,, 18	La Dame Blanche ...	Comic Opera (French) ...	Boiledieu.
June 1	Les Noces de Jeannette	Opera in 1 Act (French)	Victor Massé.
,, 1	La Fille du Régiment	Opera (French)	Donizetti.
,, 24	Les Dragons de Villars	French Opera	M. Maillart.
July 26	Barbe Bleu	Comic Opera	Offenbach.
,, 31	Lurline	Opera	Vincent Wallace.
Aug. 14	Satanella	Opera	Balfe.
Sept. 13	My Awful Dad	Comedy in 2 Acts	Charles Mathews.
,, 13	Liline and Valentin ...	Operetta	J. M. Layton. Music by Lecocq.
Oct. 16	A Crown for Love ...	Historical Play in 5 Acts	Miss J. Evelyn.
Nov. 20	Henry the Eighth ...	Historical Play	Shakespeare.
Dec. 1	All for Her	Drama	Herman Merivale and Palgrave Simpson.
,, 3	Toole at Sea	"A Nautical Nightmare"	Robert Reece.
,, 15	The Merchant of Venice	Comedy	Shakespeare.
,, 22	Tottles	Comic Drama in 3 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
1876			
Jan. 22	Twelfth Night	Comedy	Shakespeare.
,, 26	Married in Haste ...	Comedy in 4 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
Feb. 16	A Spelling Bee; or, the Battle of the Dictionaries	"An Absurdity"	Robert Reece.
,, 23	A Conjugal Lesson ...	Farce	H. Danvers.
Mar. 13	Fazio	Tragedy	Milman.
April 1	Richelieu	Drama	Bulwer Lytton.
	Wig and Gown	—	Henry J. Byron.
,, 5	Narcisse	Drama	Bandmann.

LIST OF PIECES

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPO
1876			
April 19	Venice Preserved ...	Tragedy	Otway.
May 6	Rip Van Winkle ...	Drama	Dion Boucicault.
,, 18	Young Rip Van Winkle	Extravaganza	Robert Reece.
June 3	A Scrap of Paper ...	Comedietta	Charles Mathews
	Blue Devils	Drama	Geo. Coleman Younger.
Aug. 14	The Guilty Governess; or, the Downy Doctor	—	Layton.
,, 21	No. 1 Round the Corner	Farce	Charles Mathews
,, 26	Sold Again	Farce	Robert Soutar.
,, 26	The Bull by the Horns	Farcical Drama in 3 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
,, 26	Little Don Cæsar de Bazan	Extravaganza	Henry J. Byron.
Sept. 30	Cyril's Success	Comedy	Henry J. Byron.
Oct. 22	Partners for Life ...	Comedy	Henry J. Byron.
Nov. 9	Bounce and Crypto ...	—	Colette.
,, 18	Blow for Blow	Drama	Henry J. Byron.
Dec. 4	The Man in Possession	Comic Drama in 3 Acts	James Albery.
,, 4	Cut off with a Shilling	Comedietta	Theyre Smith.
,, 21	William Tell Told Again	Burlesque	Robert Reece.
1877			
Jan. 15	Robert Macaire ...	Drama	Charles Selby.
Feb. 3	A Regular Turk ...	Farce	Robert Soutar.
,, 7	Charity begins at Home	Operetta	B. Rowe. Musi Alf. Cellier.
,, 19	Jacques Strop	—	Charles Selby.
,, 24	Artful Cards	Farcical Comedy in 3 Acts	F. C. Burnand.
Mar. 7	The Old Corporal ...	—	—
April 2	Our Babes in the Wood; or, the Orphans Released	Burlesque...	F. C. Burnand.
,, 14	The Serious Family ...	—	Morris Barnett.
,, 25	Mammon	—	Sydney Grundy.
May 23	Macbeth	Tragedy	Shakespeare.
,, 26	L'Ami Fritz	Comedy	Erckmann-Chatri
June 4	Les Chansons de Suzan	—	—
,, 4	Mon Mari est à Versailles	Farce	—
,, 4	Le Homard	Farce	M. Gondinet.
,, 18	L'Autographa	Comedy	M. Meilhac.
,, 18	Toto chez Tata	—	—
,, 25	Le Wagon des Dames	—	—
,, 25	Madame attend Monsieur	—	—
July 16	Proces Veauradieux ...	Comedy in 3 Acts	Mm. Delacour an Hennequin.
,, 16	Perfide comme l'Onde	Comedy in 1 Act	M. Gastineau.
,, 30	Weak Woman	Comedy	Henry J. Byron.
,, 30	Bohemian G'yurl ...	Burlesque	Henry J. Byron.

PERFORMED AT THE GAIETY

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1877			
Oct. 1	The Musical Box ...	Farce	F. C. Burnand.
,, 13	Little Doctor Faust ...	Burlesque	Henry J. Byron.
Nov. 3	Light	Drama in 4 Acts	Arthur J. Flaxman.
Dec. 9	The Grasshopper ...	Comic Drama in 3 Acts...	Adapted by John Hollingshead.
,, 22	Valentine and Orson...	Pantomime	Charles Merion.
1878			
Feb. 9	Old Soldiers	Comedy	Henry J. Byron.
,, 13	The Forty Thieves ...	Pantomime	Henry J. Byron, W. S. Gilbert, F. C. Burnand, and Robert Reece.
Mar. 27	War to the Knife ...	Comedy	Henry J. Byron.
April 6	Il Sonnambulo and Lively Little Alessio	Burlesque...	Henry J. Byron.
,, 21	Society *	Comedy	T. W. Robertson.
May 13	The Rajah of Mysore	Comic Opera	Music by Lecocq.
,, 18	Black-Eyed Susan ...	Drama	Douglas Jerrold.
June 1	Uncle's Will	Comedietta	Theyre Smith.
,, 12	My Preserver†	Comedy	H. T. Craven.
,, 12	Kerry; or, Night and Morning†	—	Dion Boucicault.
,, 15	A Regular Fix	Farce	J. Maddison Morton.
Aug. 26	Jeames	Comedy in 3 Acts	F. C. Burnand.
Sept. 15	Stage Struck	Farce	William Dimond.
,, 15	Helen's Babies	Farce	Garnet Walch.
Oct. 5	Fox and Wolf	Farce	—
,, 5	The Lady of Lyons Married and Settled	"A new and original Gaiety in three Scenes"	Herman Merivale.
Nov. 18	Young Fra Diavolo, the Terror of Terracina	Burlesque	Henry J. Byron.
Dec. 21	Jack the Giant Killer	Pantomime	Henry J. Byron.
1879			
Feb. 1	An Evasive Reply ...	Musical Farce	—
,, 1	Uncle	Comedy	Henry J. Byron.
,, 8	Jo	Adaptation of Dickens' "Bleak House"	—
Mar. 1	A Pair of Them ...	"Musical Trifle" in 1 Act	Peyton Wrey, Music by Meyer Lutz.
,, 29	Poulet and Poulette ...	Comic Opera	M. Hervé.
April 2	Pretty Esmeralda and Captain Phœbus of Ours	Burlesque	Henry J. Byron.
,, 30	Boulogne	Farcical Comedy in 3 Acts	F. C. Burnand, from French of Mm. Hennequin and Millaud's "Niniche."

* J. Clarke's Benefit. † Edward Terry's Benefit.

LIST OF PIECES

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPO
1879			
May 17	Man is not Perfect ...	Comic Drama	Ben Webster..
* For	List of Plays performed	by the Comédie Française, J	une 2 to July 12,
		see pp. 367, 368.	
July 12	Davenant	French Comedy	M. Jean Achard.
Aug. 30	Handsome Hernani; or, The Fatal Penny Whistle	Burlesque...	Henry J. Byron.
Sept. 27	The Great Casimir ...	Comic Musical Drama ...	Music by Ch Lecocq; lib adapted from Fr by Henry S. L
Oct. 4	An English Gentleman; or, The Squire's Last Shilling	Drama in 4 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
,, 25	Daisy Farm	Drama in 4 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
,, 27	Unlimited Cash—A Version of "Trente Millions de Gladiateur"	Farcical Drama	F. C. Burnand.
Nov. 8	Crutch and Toothpick	Comedy	George R. Sims.
,, 11	Robbing Roy; or, Scotched and Kilt	Burlesque...	F. C. Burnand.
,, 22	Just Like a Woman ...	Comedy in 3 Acts	A. W. Dubourq.
Dec. 26	Gulliver's Travels ...	Spectacular Piece in 7 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
1880			
Mar. 13	Flirtation	—	—
,, 13	The Hunchback Back Again	Farce	F. C. Burnand.
,, 27	Nightingale's Party ...	Operetta	Offenbach.
,, 27	Le Voyage en Suisse...	—	Adapted from Fr by R. Reece. M by Carl Meyde
,, 27	The Tale of a Tub ...	Farce	—
April 21	George Barnwell ...	Tragedy in 5 Acts	George Lillo.
May 5	The Castle Spectre ...	Romantic Drama in 5 Acts	Matthew Greg Lewis.
,, 19	High Life Below Stairs	—	—
,, 24	Adrienne Lecouvreur	Drama in 5 Acts	Mm. Scribe Legouvé.
,, 27	Les Enfans d'Edouard	—	Casimir de Lavig
,, 31	Frou-Frou	—	Mm. Meilhac Halévy.
June 10	L'Avare	Comedy	Molière.
,, 10	Jeane-Marie	—	M. Andre Theuri
,, 21	La Cagnotte	Comedy in 5 Acts	Mm. E. Labiche A. Delacour.
,, 22	Le Reveillon	Comedy in 3 Acts	Mm. H. Meilhac L. Halévy.

PERFORMED AT THE GAIETY

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1880			
June 23	La Boule	Comedy in 3 Acts	Mm. Meilhac and Halévy.
,, 24	Gavaut, Minard et Cie	Comedy in 3 Acts	E. Gondinet.
,, 28	Tricoche et Cacolet ...	Comedy in 5 Acts	Mm. Meilhac and Halévy.
July 2	Un Tigre du Bengale...	Comedy in 1 Act	Mm. Brisbarre and Marc-Michel.
,, 2	Celimare le Bien-Aimé	Comedy in 4 Acts	Mm. E. Labiche and Delacour.
,, 5	Geneviève; ou, La Jalousie Paternelle	Comedy in 1 Act	Scribe.
,, 5	Madame attend Monsieur	Comedy in 1 Act	Mm. Meilhac and Halévy.
,, 5	Le Homard	Comedy in 1 Act	M. E. Gondinet.
,, 6	L'Affaire de la Rue de Lourcine	Comedy in 1 Act	—
,, 6	Lolotte	Comedy in 1 Act	Mm. Meilhac and Halévy.
,, 6	Le Roi Candaule ...	Comedy in 1 Act	Mm. Meilhac and Halévy.
,, 7	La Grammaire	Comedy	Mm. Labiche and Jolly.
,, 7	La Victime	Comedy in 1 Act	M. A. Dreyfus.
,, 15	Les Jocrisses de l'amour	—	—
,, 19	Colonel Sellers	Dramatic Sketch based on a novel	Mark Twain.
,, 21	Woodcock's Little Game*	Comedy	J. Maddison Morton.
	Young Rip VanWinkle	Burlesque...	—
	Good for Nothing ...	Comic Drama	—
Aug. 30	The Mighty Dollar ...	Comedy-Drama in 4 Acts	B. E. Woolf.
Oct. 9	Trust and Trial... ...	Drama in 4 Acts	Alfred C. Calmour.
,, 23	Bow Bells	Comedy	Henry J. Byron.
,, 25	The Corsican Brothers & Co. Limited	Burlesque...	F. C. Burnand and H. P. Stephens.
Nov. 20	Captain Cuttle	Dramatic Sketch in 3 Acts	John Brougham.
,, 25	The Love Chase ...	Comedy	Sheridan Knowles.
,, 25	Andy Blake	—	Adapted by Dion Boucicault.
Dec. 11	Billee Taylor	Comic Opera	H. P. Stephens. Mus. by E. Solomon.
,, 15	Quicksands; or, the Pillars of Society	Drama in 4 Acts	William Archer, from Norwegian of Henrik Ibsen.
,, 18	The Little Mother ...	Comedy in 2 Acts	John Maddison Morton.
,, 22	The Nine Days' Queen	Romantic Drama in 4 Acts	Robert Buchanan.

* J. Maddison Morton's Benefit.

LIST OF PIECES

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1880			
Dec. 24	The Forty Thieves ...	Burlesque in 3 Acts... ...	Robert Reece.
1881			
Jan. 8	The Country Girl ...	Comedy	Wycherley.
Feb. 2	The Good-natured Man	Comedy	Oliver Goldsmith.
,, 19	The Busy Body ...	Comedy	Susannah Centlivre.
Mar. 11	Les Cloches de Corneville	Comic Opera	Music by Robert Planquette.
April 11	The Little Sentinel ...	Operetta	T. J. Williams.
,, 20	A Fight for Life ...	Drama	Adapted by H. Savile Clarke and du Terreaux, from Moy Thomas's Nove.
May 12	The Dancing Barber	—	—
,, 14	The Crown Diamonds	Burlesque...	Robert Reece.
,, 19	Medea	Tragedy	Adapted from the French of Legouvé.
,, 24	Herne the Hunted ...	Pantomimic Burlesque ...	Robert Reece and W. Yardley.
June 6	Un Monsieur en Habit Noir	Comedy in 1 Act	M. A. Dreyfus.
,, 6	La Papillone	Comedy in 3 Acts	Victorien Sardou.
,, 8	Le Fils de Coralie ...	Comedy in 4 Acts	M. Delpit.
,, 9	Le Mariage d'Olympe	Comedy in 3 Acts	Emile Augier.
,, 11	La Dame aux Camélias	Drama in 5 Acts	A. Dumas *fils*.
,, 27	Le Petit Duc	Opera Bouffe	Meilhac and Haléry. Music by C. Lecocq.
July 4	La Petite Mariée ...	Opera Comique	Meilhac and Halévy. Music by C. Lecocq.
,, 6	Belle Lurette	Opera Comique	E. Blum, Blau, and R. Toché. Music by J. Offenbach.
,, 23	Les Voltigeurs	Opera Comique in 3 Acts	E. Godinet and G. Duval. Music by Planquette.
Oct. 8	Bubbles	Comedietta in 1 Act ...	Charles S. Fawcett.
,, 12	Pygmalion and Galatea	Comedy	W. S. Gilbert.
,, 15	Imprudence	—	—
,, 15	Whittington and his Cat	Burlesque Drama in 3 Acts	F. C. Burnand.
,, 22	Liz	Drama in 4 Acts	Joseph Hatton and Arthur Matthison.
Nov. 5	All in the Downs; or, Black-eyed Susan	Opera, founded upon Douglas Jerrold's drama, with lyrics by Tom Jerrold	Music by Meyer Lutz.
Dec. 24	Aladdin	Burlesque Drama	Robert Reece.

PERFORMED AT THE GAIETY

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1882			
Feb. 8	A Son of the Soil ...	Romantic Play	H. C. Merivale.
Mar. 4	Oh! Those Girls ...	"A Musical Mummery"	Adapted from the German by R. Soutar. Music by Meyer Lutz.
April 29	Lord Bateman; or, Picotee's Pledge	Comic Opera in 2 Acts ...	H. P. Stephens. Music by Edward Solomon.
May 4	Blindfold	Comedietta	R. Soutar.
,, 16	Reparation	Play in 5 Acts...	Adapted from the German of Mosenthal.
,, 22	Pampered Menials ...	Farce	Henry J. Byron.
June 1	Les Faux Ménages ...	Comedy in 4 Acts	M. Pailleron.
,, 19	L'Aventurière	—	Emile Augier.
,, 23	La Soupière	—	M. d'Hervilly.
,, 28	Les Rantzau	Comedy in 4 Acts	Erckmann-Chatrian.
,, 30	Le Mari à la Campagne	Comedy in 3 Acts	Bayard and Jules de Vailly.
July 3	Divorçons	Comedy in 3 Acts	V. Sardou and De Najac.
,, 17	Through the Looking Glass	Musical Farce	H. P. Stephens. Music by E. Solomon.
Sept. 9	His Only Coat'... ...	—	—
,, 15	Little Robin Hood ...	Burlesque Drama in 3 Acts	Robert Reece.
,, 16	An Old Flame	Comedietta	Adapted by W. T. Blackmore.
,, 16	Black, but Comely ...	Drama	Miss Stephanie Forrester.
Oct. 28	Done on Both Sides	Farce	—
Nov. 1	More than Ever ...	Burlesque in 1 Act	Arthur Mathison.
,, 30	I'll See You Right ...	Farcical Comedy	J. R. Crauford.
Dec. 6	My Life	Drama in 4 Acts	Miss Archer.
,, 7	The Knight of the Garter	Comic Operetta	J. Sheldon Wilson. Music by Meyer Lutz.
,, 23	Valentine and Orson	Burlesque Drama in 2 Acts	Robert Reece.
1883			
Feb. 13	My Darling	Comedy Drama in 3 Acts	E. Romaine Callender.
,, 21	An Unequal Match ...	Comedy	Tom Taylor.
,, 28	Who Speaks First?...	Farce	Charles Dance.
,, 28	Peacock's Holiday ...	Farcical Comedy in 2 Acts	Herman Merivale.
Mar. 7	A Cup of Tea	Comedietta in 1 Act ...	—
,, 7	Crazed	Musical Absurdity	Alfred R. Phillips.
,, 8	Ensnared	Drama in 3 Acts	Adapted from French by Walter Frith.

LIST OF PIECES

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1883			
Mar. 12	Bluebeard; or, The Hazard of the Dye	Burlesque Drama in 3 Acts	F. C. Burnand.
,, 28	Cymbeline...	—	Shakespeare.
April 3	The Honeymoon ...	Comedy	John Tobin.
,, 9	*Vice-versâ*: A Lesson to Fathers	Dramatic Sketch in 3 Tableaux	Edward Rose.
,, 13	That Rascal Pat ...	—	Tom Taylor.
,, 17	Plot and Passion ...	Drama	—
,, 17	The Royal Word ...	Comic Opera in 1 Act ...	Henry Hersee. Music by Isidore de Lara.
,, 18	The Decoy...	Comedy Drama in 3 Acts	Frederick Eastwood.
,, 27	Ingomar	Play in 5 Acts	Mrs. Lovell.
,,	After Darkness, Dawn	—	A. A. Dowty.
May 1	For King and Country	Drama	Edmund Leathes.
,, 8	Knowledge	Comedy in 3 Acts	—
,, 8	Madame de Raimont	Drama in 1 Act	R. Henry.
,, 17	Chopsticks and Spikins	Farce	Tom Taylor.
,, 21	The Mysterious Stranger	Drama in 4 Acts	Charles Selby.
,, 24	Estrella	Comic Opera in 3 Acts ...	W. Parke. Music by Luscombe Searelle.
,, 28	Put Asunder	Drama in 4 Acts	Freeman Wills.
,, 31	Chained to the Oar ...	Drama in 4 Acts	Henry J. Byron.
June 1	The Post Boy	Drama in 2 Acts	T. Craven.
,, 4	Lili	Comedy in 3 Acts	Mm. Hennequin, Millaud and Blum.
,, 6	Niniche	Comedy in 3 Acts	Mm. Hennequin and Millaud.
,, 8	Les Charbonniers ...	Comedy in 1 Act	M. Gille. Music by M. Costé.
,, 11	Serge Panine	Play in 5 Acts	Georges Ohnet.
,, 13	Un Roman Parisien ..	Play in 5 Acts...	Octave Feuillet.
,, 15	Un Mari qui Pleure ...	Comedy in 1 Act	Jules Prével.
,, 15	La Corte Forcée ...	Comedy in 2 Acts	Mm. Crémieuxe and Pernety.
,, 18	Monsieur le Ministre	Comedy in 5 Acts	Jules Claretie.
,, 20	Le Père de Martial ...	Play in 4 Acts...	M. A. Delpit.
,, 25	Odette	Comedy in 4 Acts	Victorien Sardou.
,, 27	Le Nabab	Play in 7 Tableaux... ...	A. Daudet and P. Elzear.
July 3	La Cigale	Comedy in 3 Acts	Mm. H. Meilhac and L. Halévy.
,, 9	Fédora	Play in 4 Acts...	Victorien Sardou.
,, 16	Virginia and Paul; or, Changing the Rings	Comic Opera	H. P. Stephens. Music by Edward Solomon.
Sept. 8	Our Cinderella	Burlesque in 2 Acts ...	Robert Reece.
,, 22	My Sweetheart	Musical Comedy in 3 Acts	Arranged by F. G. Maeder.
,, 26	Marie Stuart	—	—
Oct. 8	Ariel	Burlesque Drama in 3 Acts	F. C. Burnand.
,, 31	Agnes of Bavaria ...	Play in 5 Acts...	Frederick Hawley.

PERFORMED AT THE GAIETY

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1883			
Nov. 14	Found	Drama in 4 Acts	Frederick Hawley.
,, 21	Masks and Faces ...	—	Charles Reade.
Dec. 10	The Rocket	Comedy in 3 Acts	A. W. Pinero.
,, 26	Galatea; or, Pygmalion Reversed	Burlesque in 1 Scene ...	H. P. Stephens.
1884			
Jan. 2	The Serf	Drama in 3 Acts	Tom Taylor.
,, 31	Camaralzaman	Burlesque Fairy Drama...	F. C. Burnand.
Feb. 20	Young Couples	Comedietta in 2 Acts ...	J. H. Johnstone.
,, 20	The Nuptial Noose ...	Comic Opera in 2 Acts ...	W. Heron Brown. Music by Charles Dubois.
Mar. 3	Polly's Birthday ...	Comedietta	Charles Fawcett.
,, 5	Gabrielle	Romantic Drama in 4 Acts	Sydney Hodges.
,, 20	My Queen	Play in Prologue and 3 Acts	Howell Poole.
,, 26	Her Own Enemy ...	Drama	Adapted from a novel by Miss Florence Marryat.
April 1	Wanted	Farce	H. W. Williamson.
,, 5	The Area Belle... ...	Farce	William Brough and Andrew Halliday.
,, 8	Our Helen	Burlesque Drama in 3 Acts	Adapted from "La Belle Hélène" by Robert Reece.
,, 21	Der Freyschütz... ...	Burlesque...	Henry J. Byron.
,, 24	Only an Actor	Comedy in 3 Acts	W. Muskerry.
,, 30	Our Square	Farcical Comedy in 3 Acts	Edward Rose.
May 3	Dick	Comic Opera	—
,, 7	Time and the Hour ...	Drama	J. Palgrave Simpson.
,, 10	My Preserver	Farce	Craven.
,, 14	Gentle Gertrude; or, Doomed, Drugged, and Drowned at Datchet	"Musical Piece of Absurdity"	T. Edgar Pemberton. Music by T. Anderton.
June 7	Retribution	Domestic Drama in 4 Acts	—
,, 7	Our Bitterest Foe ...	—	Lord Burghclere.
,, 9	Niniche	Comedy in 3 Acts	Mm. Hennequin and Millaud.
,, 13	Mam'zelle Nitouche...	Comedy with Songs ...	H. Meilhac and A. Millaud.
,, 18	La Cosaque	Comedy with Songs ...	H. Meilhac and A. Millaud.
July 4	Macbeth	Tragedy	French Translation by M. Jean Richepin.
Aug. 2	The Little Viscount ...	Comedy in 2 Acts	Adapted by Hermann Vezin.
,, 16	To Oblige Benson ...	Comedietta	Tom Taylor.

LIST OF PIECES

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1884			
Aug. 27	Faith; or, Eddication and Rights	Comedy Drama in 3 Acts	John Last.
,, 30	Little Lohengrin ...	—	—
Sept. 25	First in the Field ...	Comedy	C. M. Rae.
,, 25	One Touch of Nature	Drama in 1 Act	Benjamin Webster.
,, 29	A Wet Day	Farcical Comedy in 3 Acts	Walter Browne.
Oct. 15	Called There and Back	Burlesque Parody	Herman C. Merivale.
Nov. 12	Nita's First	Comedy	T. G. Warren.
,, 22	Lilies; or, Hearts and Actresses	Farcical Society Comedy in 3 Acts	Harry Paulton.
,, 29	Very Little Hamlet ...	Burlesque in Prologue and 3 Acts	W. Yardley.
Dec. 4	Ethel's Test	—	W. H. Williamson.
,, 4	The Wedding March	Comedy	W. S. Gilbert.
,, 4	Cousin Grace	—	J. Delly and L. Clifton.
,, 10	Bearding the Lion ...	Farce	—
,, 24	In Chancery	Eccentric Comedy in 3 Acts	A. W. Pinero.
1885			
Jan. 3	The Pinauderies ...	—	—
Mar. 4	A Fair Sinner	Play in 5 Acts	G. W. Appleton.
,, 12	Mazeppa	Burlesque in 3 Acts ...	F. C. Burnand.
April 15	Won by a Trick ...	Comic Opera	Shedden Wilson. Music by Meyer Lutz.
,, 15	Blindfold	—	From the French by by R. Soutar.
,, 16	Promised in Pique ...	Play in 3 Acts	—
,, 22	My Friend	Farcical Comedy	J. Tabrar.
May 2	Fits and Starts	Farce in 2 Acts	Wilton Jones and Walter Browne.
,, 2	The Laundry Belle ...	—	Shedden Wilson. Music by Meyer Lutz.
,, 5	Culture	Comedy in 3 Acts	Sebastian Evans, M.A., LL.D., and Frank Evans.
,, 6	Severine	—	Adapted from "La Princesse Georges" of A. Dumas *fils*.
June 6	Lakmé	Opera	Music by Léo Délibes. Libretto by Edmond Gondinet and Philippe Gille.
,, 8	Le Prince Zilah ...	Play in 4 Acts	Jules Claretie.
,, 16	Mignon	Opera Comique in 3 Acts	Music by Ambroise Thomas.
,, 20	Le Maître de Forges	Play in 4 Acts and 5 Tableaux	M. G. Ohnet.

PERFORMED AT THE GAIETY

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1885			
July 11	Théodora	Drama	Victorien Sardou.
Aug. 8	The Vicar of Wide-awake-field; or, The Miss - Terry - ous Uncle	Burlesque	H. P. Stephens and W. Yardley.
Dec. 12	Solomon's Sword ...	Operetta	(In Hindustani. Played by Parsee Company.).
,, 12	The Fancy Ball ...	Comic Sketch	(In Hindustani. Played by Parsee Company.)
,, 12	Sakúntala	—	By Calidasa (Played by Parsee Company).
,, 26	Little Jack Sheppard	Burlesque in 3 Acts ...	H. P. Stephens and W. Yardley.
1886			
Jan. 9	Under Cover	Comedietta	Adapted by Cunningham Bridgman.
Feb. 4	Mistaken Identity ...	Farce	A. Murray.
,, 4	Les Deux Timides ...	Vaudeville in 1 Act ...	—
,, 18	Erminie	Comic Opera	—
,, 18	Which?	Farce in 2 Acts	A. G. Bagot.
Mar. 15	Love and Stratagem	Play in 3 Acts	Oswald Brand and E. W. Linging.
,, 17	Atlantis; or, The Lost Land	Comic Opera in 3 Acts...	M. Dalton and E. Genet. Music by T. M. Haddon.
April 20	Veracity	Whimsical Comedy in 3 Acts	Walter Parke.
May 3	Carl	Opera in 1 Act	Shedden Wilson. Music by Meyer Lutz.
,, 12	David Garrick	Comedy in 3 Acts	T. W. Robertson.
,, 19	Rigoletto	Opera	Verdi.
,, 20	Perfection	—	—
,, 20	Tweedie's Rights ...	Comedy Drama in 2 Acts	James Albery.
,, 20	Chiselling	Farce	—
,, 21	Hand and Heart ...	Play in 1 Act	W. Yardley and H. P. Stephens.
,, 31	Adonis	Burlesque in 2 Acts ...	—
June 11	Mehalah; or, The Power of Will	Romantic Drama in 5 Acts	Adapted by Wm. Poel and W. H. G. Palmer.
,, 16	Old Sinners	Comedy	Adaptation of Sardou's "Les Vieux Garçons," by James Mortimer.

LIST OF PIECES

DATE	TITLE	DESCRIPTION	AUTHOR OR COMPOSER
1886			
June 18	The Confidential Clerk	Farcical Comedy in 3 Acts	Adapted by Sydney Wittman and Shedden Wilson.
,, 23	Mischief	Comedy in 3 Acts	Cunningham Bridgman.
,, 23	Quid pro Quo	Operetta	Rutland Barrington and Cunningham Bridgman. Music by Wilfrid Bendall.
July 10	Slasher and Crasher ...	Farce	J. Maddison Morton.
,, 12	The Jones's Notes ...	Farcical Comedy in 3 Acts	Joseph Tabrar.
,, 23	Knight against Rook	Comedy in 4 Acts	Owen Dove and J. G. Lefebie.

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